

LETTERS

DESCRIBING

The CHARACTER and CUSTOMS

OF THE

ENGLISH

AND

FRENCH

NATIONS.

at the close of the 17th Century.

With a curious ESSAY on

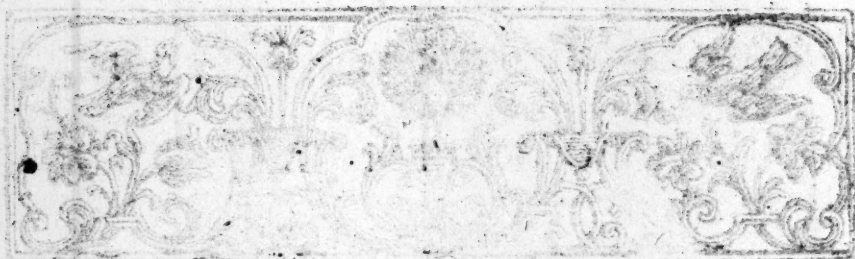
TRAVELLING;

And a Criticism on BOILEAU's Description of PARIS.

Translated from the French.

L O N D O N :

Printed and Sold by THO. EDLIN, at the Prince's Arms, over-against Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand. MDCCXXVI.



The Traveller

PRELACE

As one of the following

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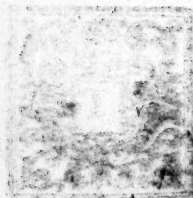
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The Translator's P R E F A C E.



THE Author of the following Letters was so great a Lover of a private and retired Life, and so averse to Pageantry and Shew, that there remains but little to entertain the Reader with, concerning his Name, or Person.

He was of Switzerland, and serv'd some Time in the late King of France's Armies. He afterwards quitted all publick Business, on a Principle of Conscience, and was banish'd for censuring the Abuses in Religious Ceremonies with which he could not comply; and now leads a solitary and austere Life.

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These Letters have undergone as many Vicissitudes of Fortune as their Author. The same Principle that induced him to abandon the Care of worldly Affairs, prompted him to burn all the Copies he could find: But, notwithstanding his Diligence, some escap'd; and one of the Letters happening to be publish'd in Holland, not long since, and it being advertis'd at the same Time, that others would soon be printed, and there being several counterfeited Letters handed about, under the Author's Name, his Friends made Use of that Opportunity to collect the whole, and to prevail with him, after two Years Importunity, to revise the Work; so that it is now as correct, especially the Part relating to the English, as when it was first penn'd.

Having now given the Reader a short History of the Author, and his Letters, it will be proper, in the next Place, to say something of their Merit.

He appears, thro' the whole, to be a Person of a fine Taste, his Wit is sprightly and elegant, his Judgement solid, his Reasoning strong and persuasive, and his Erudition extensive, without the least Mixture of Pedantry, or Affectation.

The Letters on the English, present us with a compleat Character of our Nation: Others have, indeed, given Hints of some
of

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of our particular *Virtues* and *Vices*; but this Author has taken a Survey of the whole: He is not content with superficial, or cursory Observations; he goes to the Bottom, and searches into the Physical as well as the Moral Causes of our *Virtues* and *Vices*, *Inclinations* and *Passions*, *Laws* and *Customs*: He points out the Ways of remedying our Defects and improving our Advantages; in a Word, all Ranks of People may find some Benefit by perusing these Letters. The States-man will observe some of the grossest Errors in our Constitution and Laws; the Virtuosi will find Matter enough for new Speculations; the Clergy may improve by them, and the Nation in general may see some of their Defects, particularly their watu Boasting, and Contempt of Strangers set in a clear Light, in order to Amendment.

He proceeds in drawing the Character of the French, being the People he opposes to the English on most Occasions; and nothing can be more beneficial to us than to have a true Idea of that Nation, either in Peace or in War: But I think it will be proper to observe in this Place, that the Letters on the French fall far short of those on the English; whether this Variation must be deduc'd from the different Periods of Youth and old Age, or a Change of Fortune, I cannot determine: The same

Remark



Remark has been made on the Works of some of the most celebrated Authors; and the Learned are well appriz'd how much the Iliad is superior to the Odyssey in all the Beauties of the Composition.

He has, likewise, given us, at the Conclusion, some necessary Instructions for Travellers, which ought to be highly esteem'd in an Age when Travels are look'd upon as one of the greatest Accomplishments of our Nobility and Gentry.

The Author of these Letters seem'd to be cut out for the Task he undertook. Besides his great Abilities, of which I have taken Notice before, he was possess'd of another Qualification, which may be said to be as it were the very Life, or as the Logicians have it, the Forma informans of a Writer; that is Veracity: He keeps close to it on all Occasions, and makes it the Scope of every Thing he writes. There was, likewise, another Advantage on his Side; he was a Foreigner: People are seldom disengag'd enough from Prepossession, to see the Faults of their own Nation; for which Reason that Task ought always to be reserv'd for others.

Having now endeavour'd to shew our Author on the best Side, it will be Justice to take some Notice of his Defects: But I must observe, that the Genius of the French Language, and Manner of writing differ much

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much from the English; and this may, perhaps, be thought to be a sufficient Apology for him; and there is no doubt but a great many Passages, which are cry'd up in French Authors, would make a very indifferent Figure in our Language. But, without enlarging any more on this Topick, the Author is sometimes very obscure and metaphysical, and handles some Subjects with too much Delicacy, at least for an English Taste; and it is odd to see him fall into these Errors, in regard he often censures them in other Authors.

Here it may not be improper to observe, that as some of these Letters were wrote above thirty Years since, the Reader must not be surpriz'd at the Variation between the Customs and Ways of those Times, (which the Author sometimes takes Notice of,) and those in our Generations, nor at some Mistakes which he may have fallen into, with regard to our Laws and Constitution; for such may well happen to a Foreigner, notwithstanding the most diligent Inquiries.

As for the Translation, it has been a Work of no small Difficulty; which I am persuaded will be readily acknowledg'd by those who are skill'd in the French. Compositions of Wit seldom assume a foreign Dress without considerable Loss; and as the French Language has a greater Store of Phrases and significant Terms than any Living Languages

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ges whatever, and the English but few to correspond with them, it is not easy to imagine what a Task a Translator has to undergo. I have endeavour'd, on all Occasions, to keep close to the Author's Sense, that being the essential Part of every Version: But whatever Fate this may have, I flatter myself it would make a tolerable Figure in an Age less fertile in Criticks than the present.

As for the Criticism on Boileau's Sixth Satyr, I once thought of omitting it in this Edition, as turning chiefly on French Terms, and consequently of little or no Use to an English Reader. But, unwilling any Performance of this notable Gentleman's should be lost to the Publick, I at length determin'd to print the Original, together with as intelligible a Version of it as I could make, for the Satisfaction of the mere English Purchaser. My Author's curious Criticism, as may well be suppos'd, loses in the English the far greatest Part of its native Tartness. I shall not go about to interfere as to the Justness of it: That I leave to others; and shall only say, that our judicious Swift has made a good Choice; for, in my Opinion, of all Boileau's Works, this Satyr of his is what would best bear being criticis'd upon. In the French this Letter is the last but one; and to avoid an unseemly Mixture I have transpos'd it, and it now closes the whole.

L E T T E R S



LETTERS

Concerning the

English Nation, &c.



LETTER I.

S I R,



Am resolved, during my stay in *England*, to give you some Account of the Manners and Character of the People, not only to amuse you, but with a serious intention of drawing such a Portrait as may give you a just Idea of the Nation. I'll inform you of all that comes to my Knowledge, but without travelling far to make Observations; and that with Exactness, according to the best of my Judgment, both of us may however be

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sometimes mistaken. In a word, Truth shall be my chief Aim in every thing I write, but I cannot take upon me to say that I shall always meet with her; and it would, in my Opinion, be Rashness to promise it. The ways whereby the *English* are chiefly known in the World are the very same that make them remarkable when we are with them, that is, by Prosperity, the Magnificence of the Great, and the Plenty among the common People. 'Tis easy to observe at the same time the usual Effects of Happiness; Corruption, and a kind of Pride, call'd Insolence among those that suffer by it. Corruption is come to such a heighth in *England*, that it appears bare-faced. I have sometimes heard People impute it to King CHARLES II. who is reported to have given continual Examples of Excess and Debauchery; but, in my Opinion, the *English* don't stand in need of any extraordinary Precedent, to make them what they are: Generally speaking, they have little Education, a great deal of Money to lavish, and all possible Incentives to Vice; so that we may well expect to find a great number of dissolute People among them. It must likewise be observ'd that *England* is a Country of Liberty, every one lives there as he wishes; which, no doubt, is the Source of the many extraordinary Characters among them, Heroes in Evil as well as in Good. It likewise gives them a Freedom of Thoughts and Sentiments, which does not a little contribute to their good Sense, wherein they are distinguish'd, generally speaking, from most other Nations.

Their Pride, (or, if I dare make use of the usual Term) their Insolence, is neither so extravagant nor general as People imagine. Their little Regard for the Grandees, with their Unwillingness

willingness to yield them any Superiority, as is usual in other Countries, may by some be imputed to Pride; but it never exerts itself more than in such things as tend to Liberty, and in their violent manner of enjoying some Pleasures. I have not remark'd any Insolence among them to Strangers, at least in the common Affairs of Life; so that I cannot see any Reason for distinguishing them from other Nations, on that Score; and generally speaking, their Ways are far from being either so harsh or disagreeable to us as most People imagine. They do not trouble themselves much about us, when they don't know us; and when they do, they make us sensible sometimes *that they love themselves best*: That is enough. They are strongly prepossess'd in Favour of their own Nation; this influences all their Discourse and Ways, and affords matter of Complaint to Strangers: And perhaps the Folly of the greatest Part of the World may be imputed to the same Error; but in regard People stand in need of one another's Assistance, it is generally conceal'd for the Benefit of the Society. The *English* are no way bridled by any Consideration of that Kind; being rich enough to live within themselves, and separated by Sea from the rest of the World, they are above Restraint, wherein the *French* ought to be dispensed with on some Occasions, since the *English* never practise it on any. Besides their great Wealth and Contempt of Strangers, I think the Bravery of the Men, and Beauty of the Woman, may be added to the ordinary Character of the Nation: I will give you my Opinion on that Head. Their Bravery is universally establish'd with good Reason: They give convincing Proofs of it in despising Death; yet few of them hunt after War in foreign Countries, for the same

Reason, perhaps, that few go to Court: It is because they have Wealth and good Sense. They neither go to War, nor much esteem those who do. The Title of *Captain* is very insignificant among them; every idle Fellow, who is a Stranger, provided he has a Sword on, they honour him with that Title, as in *France* every trifling Fellow, who wears the Cloak and little Band, bears the Title of *Abbé*. Their Bravery is no less conspicuous in Duels; but such Kind of Combats are not much heard of; yet when they happen, the Parties behave themselves well. In my Opinion, true Courage (the Want of which has introduced these new Ways among Men) is to be found here; that is, Resolution to pursue Reason against Custom, in order to any good Action: Here are great Numbers of such brave Men, as you will observe by several Passages with which I shall have an Opportunity of acquainting you on this Head.

The common People are as little solicitous after the great Men as they are after the Court; it would seem as if they were neither fear'd nor admir'd, as in other Countries. On the contrary, one may observe a Spirit of Liberty which is countenanced by the Government: And if all I have heard of be true, it is in *England* that a Man is Master of his own, without the Oppressions of the Great, or ever knowing them, if he thinks fit; They are only consider'd in Proportion to the Good they do; if they do much, as it often happens, then they become truly great Lords, by their numerous Levies, the Complaisance and Esteem of the People, and are like little Kings, in their Country Houses. If they do but little Good, they are left to themselves, to enjoy their Prerogatives in Sadness, and their Condition is pretty near what one of them has acknowledged it

it to be, on a certain Occasion. " We can't
" (says he) be arrested for Debt, for which Reason
" we can have no Credit; in lieu of an Oath,
" we are obliged to swear only on our Honour,
" but then few believes us; there's a Law to
" prevent People from speaking ill of us, but
" we, as well as others, are sometimes bastina-
" doed in the Streets." He might have added,
that their Birth gives them Seats in Parliament,
but that their House does not rule all: You know
'tis the lower that has the greatest Share in the
Determination of all important Affairs. Give
me leave to say something of it.

'Tis partly by the Care of the House of Com-
mons, that *England* has preserv'd her Liberty
under a Kingly Government, which no doubt is
sufficient to gain them the greatest Esteem, nor
is it well possible to conceive too high an Idea of
that House; 'tis however easy in other Respects
to fall into an Error on this Topick. In a Coun-
try of good Sense one might well expect to find
a great many Men of Abilities, in a Meeting of
four or five hundred, chose from among all the
rest; but it happens otherwise, to judge of them
at least by their Deliberations and long Debates
upon small Affairs. Thus it happens here, as it
commonly does in numerous Assemblies, some
of the most understanding, or the boldest, set up
for Chiefs, and lead the rest: There's likewise
found among the last, some that are tired with
being led, and so resolve to go alone, and even
venture to make Speeches; 'tis then we are to
expect Miracles. In the Year 1693, one of these
wise Senators concluded his Harangue with say-
ing, that he hoped, before the end of the Year,
to see the King of *France* present himself at the

Bar of the House, and beg for Peace from the Parliament on his Knees.

In other Respects the (a) Nobles that compose the lower House, seem to be the happiest People in the World: By this Order of Nobility I would have that called Gentry understood, but the title of Noble does not entirely square with them, according to the common Idea, nor their way of living, with that of the Nobility in other Countries. They are a rich People, whose Birth no way subjects them to any Nicety, or troublesome Punctilio, so that they may follow any kind of Business, in case of Need: That indeed makes them Mechanicks, but on the other hand, Debauchery and Hunting are their usual Employments, where they behave themselves as much like Gentlemen as on other Occasions. As for the Exercises of riding the great Horse, dancing, and fencing, they quite neglect them; as well as some genteel and polite ways, which in other Countries are found only among the Nobles. But what I have said must be understood chiefly of young People that have not travelled, and is not so generally true, but that it may admit of some Exceptions, which often happens in general Characters of Nations.

Let us now go on to the Clergy.

'Tis surprizing to observe at first View the Air of Health and Prosperity of the greatest Part of them; and it is pleasant to see how fat and fair these Parsons are. They are charged with being somewhat lazy, and their usual *Plumpness* makes it suspected that there's some Truth in it. It is common to see them in Coffee-

(a) The French divide their Nobility into high and low, the first agrees with the English Peers, and the other with the Gentry.

Coffee-Houses, and even in Taverns, with Pipes in their Mouths. This would, no doubt, at first give some Offence to a Stranger; but as 'tis the Custom of the Country, and none thinking it scandalous, there's no more notice taken of them in those Places than of others. There's one thing which they have in common with the Clergy of other Nations, that their Sermons are more respected than their Persons. Besides the Shortness of their Discourses, which renders them preferable to ours, they read them in lieu of repeating by heart; or to speak more properly, in pronouncing they cast their Eyes from Time to Time on their Notes to help them out; and I am persuaded their way would not displease you; it not only prevents the violent Action of a Declaimer, the counterfeit Passions, and outrageous Gesticulations, which are no way agreeable to the Dignity of Religion, but what is no less important, it enables them to give force to their Sermons, without losing any thing in getting them by heart; so that one does not hear any idle Stories, hardly worth writing, and which could not be read without an ill Grace. It would seem as if they design'd to reform Mankind in good Earnest, and their Sermons, by powerful reasoning, tend to make Men sociable and virtuous; but tho' they should fail of Success, they give no Occasion, at least, by long and insipid Harangues, to some to laugh at the Preacher, and to others to laugh at Religion.

I have sometimes consider'd the Difference between the *English* Preachers and others, the *French* for Example; the first goes into the Pulpit with an Air of Modesty and Fear, and one might say he is afraid of looking on the Audience; the Tone of his Voice is sedate, his Reasoning short

and natural, and abounds with good Sense. The other, on the contrary, seems to be mounting a Throne, and in getting up, one may perceive him to swell with Ecclesiastick Pride; he begins with turning his Head on all Sides, and looking arrogantly on his Hearers, as if he would inspire them with Respect for his Person, his Discourse is long and tiresome, full of Fancies and Flowers of Rhetorick, he lays about him furiously, and cries out like a Man unprovided with good Reasons to persuade, or Dignity to give Weight to what he advances.

I must not forget to tell you, that the *English* have been very successful in promoting the Sciences, and that they have a great number of good Writers on most Subjects. But this is no way surprizing, they are sensible of their own Freedom, and live at their Ease, they love to make use of their Reason, and neglect any Politeness or Behaviour in Discourse that renders Wit little or mean. In a word, their Language is rich and perspicuous, scarcely admitting any thing that is trifling. Be it as it will, they pretend to have had the Start of other Nations in the Advancement of Learning, for a whole Century at least. This is a Pretension so like to disturb *Parnassus*, and to stir up Disputes in the angry Commonwealth of the Learned, that while I am speaking, methinks I hear the Charge sounded, and the *Literati* running to Arms. The *English* pretend likewise to more Wit, or Wit of a better Allay than the rest of the World; which may be true so far, that there are some of them that think with more Force, and have more bold Thoughts than the Men of Wit in other Nations. But in my Opinion they are neither delicate nor natural, and I am persuaded you'll find their
Works

Works over-charg'd with Thoughts. But I shall have Occasion hereafter to examine this Affair more particularly. Now for the Merchants.

They seem to me to differ from other Merchants in many Things; they are neither in so much haste as the *French* to grow rich, nor so niggardly as the *Dutch* to save; their Houses are richly furnished, and their Tables well served; none can out-do a Merchant in good eating, if he makes it his Business, and 'tis, no doubt, this sumptuous way of living that obliges them to sell their Goods at dear Rates, for being accustomed to great Expences, they despise small Gain. There's something very singular in their Character, and 'which, in my Opinion, distinguishes them still more from other Merchants; no sooner do they acquire Wealth, but they quit Traffick, and turn Country Gentlemen; so that some of them know when to stop, and to enjoy the Fruits of their Labour. There must be a great Number of such Gentlemen, for a Book has been lately printed, in which the Author, who is a Merchant, charges them with weakening Trade.

The *English* Mechanicks have acquired a great deal of Reputation in the World, and in many Things not without Reason; for they excel in Clock and Cabinet Work, making Saddles, and all Sorts of Tools, and in several other Things, which I can't call to mind at this Time. There are likewise some in which they have got a Name, without any Foundation: Their small Pieces of Steel Work are little worth, tho' they set a high Value on them, and sell them at a dear Rate; the Temper is indeed good, but as for the Workmanship, 'tis ill placed, and ill finished; and generally speaking, they are out-done by the
French

French in every kind of Toy Work, which is indeed rather curious than useful, and their best Masters come from *Paris*. The small Experience of the People of this Country in Things of this Kind, must be attributed to their Dislike of Trifles, and their too great Easiness in paying roundly for every thing they buy; the greatest Part of them judge only of a Work by the Price, and you may well think that the Workman, being at no great Pains to please them, and in the way of growing rich at his Ease, is not over diligent in minding his Trade, and consequently will never excel in it.

I know the *English* Peasants but by one way: They are commonly on Horseback, in Riding-Coats, and Plush Breeches, booted and spurred and always galloping. None but the Carters let their Horses go at their own pace, being oblig'd to trudge on heavily by the Cart's side. 'Tis pretended that the *English* Peasants are neither so clownish nor ignorant as those of other Countries.

The People in general are well cloathed, which is a certain Proof of their living at Ease; for in *England* the Belly always takes place of the Back. As for the common People, there's no great occasion of giving a particular Account of them; they seem to me to be jumbled in most things with the whole Nation; generally speaking, they have the same Pleasures with the Nobles, the Clergy, and the Merchants, the same Virtues, and the same Vices. And tho' few of them have the Advantage of Education, they are however to be valued as well as the others, for their good natural Parts. They are seldom oppress'd by the Grandees, who are so inconsiderable in their Eyes, that, as I told you before, they regard them no further than they do Good. Now I have

have told you every thing that offer'd for this time concerning the Men, give me leave to say something of the Women.

I own to you that the Beauty of *English* Women does not touch me much: They have all fair Hair and beautiful fair Faces, but without any Sprightlinefs. I fee here a hundred handsome Women, but not ten of the Number agreeable; yet there are some of another Opinion, and think them rather agreeable than handsome; what pleases me most is their Modesty, and a gentle Bashfulness, that makes them easily blush, and cast down their Eyes every Minute: They are for the most part finely shaped, which is their greatest Charm; they have a noble Air, and are tall, and slender, and they wear fine Cloaths, which is no small Advantage. I have seen some that thought their Shoulders and Hips were of the smallest, occasion'd in a great measure by their strait way of dressing, but they begin to amend that Fault. They have still a much greater in not taking Care of their Teeth, which is the more necessary, because, according to the way of the Country, they eat much Flesh, and little Bread, which is another bad Custom, and must be attended with ill Consequences. The want of this Niceness is a great Injury to *English* Women, who in other respects not only appear to be nice, but are really so. They delight in covering their Faces with Patches, which they don't want, and serve only to make People think they have more of a Coquet Humour than is true. There are even some of their elderly Women that will not part with them; I have seen Patches on an old Woman's Face thro' her Spectacles. As for their Humour, they are taken to be gentle, frank, and easy; at first reserv'd,

serv'd, but soon growing familiar, even to a degree of playing the Fool; hasty in Anger, but, in other respect, lazy and accustom'd to Idleness. Among the common People, the Husbands seldom make their Wives work: As to the Women of Quality, they don't trouble themselves much about it, except those near the Queen's Person, who I believe is one of the best Workwomen in the Kingdom, and 'tis probable she may bring working into Fashion. From their Idleness proceeds their Uneasiness, their Curiosity to know things to come, their Fondness of Fortune-telling, and their Credulity. This Character made the Famous Earl of *Rochester* think of a merry Project; he was not only the most debauched, but likewise the wittiest Man of his time, and the best acquainted with Women: Having leisure on his Hands, during the Interval of a small Disgrace at Court, he sets up a Stage, in the Disguise of a Mountebank, and gave himself out for a great Astrologer, boasting that he had infallible Secrets for beautifying the Face. His Design succeeded, according to Expectation; the fine Women run to him in Crowds; and 'tis reported that he communicated his Secrets to some, and taught them the way of enjoying the present Time, without troubling themselves much about that to come.

I now return to give a general Character of the *English*; but I will not warrant any Reflections of that kind, further than I find them true by my own Experience of the People. They seem for the most Part to have great Virtues or great Faults, and very often both; A great Share of good Sense, but somewhat whimsical: Their Hearts are great, and their Unevenness of Temper flings them sometimes a top of other Nations,
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and sometimes under. They have a happy Way of conceiving Things, but its Fire resembles that of their Coals, having more Force than Brightness. They speak little, but whatever they say has weight. They make Reflections, and know the Value of Things so much the better, in that they see with their own Eyes, and have Courage enough to judge for themselves. They are satisfied with their Condition, tho' it be but indifferent, nor do they take much Pains to make it better. Few *Englishmen* go a Fortune-hunting, and perhaps it may be said, to their Honour, that not one of those few ever succeeds. They enjoy what they have, and live according to their Inclinations, which sometimes are none of the best. As to other Things, they are moderate enough in their Expences, that they may appear less happy than they really are, and for that Reason would have their Happiness, in many Things, depend on themselves. They are not much troubled about the Opinions which People may have of them, nor do they take much Notice of what others do. They thwart Custom boldly, tho' never so well establish'd, when either Reason or Inclination prompt them to it. Most of them neglect the ways of pleasing, but they cultivate their Reason, and dare make use of it, as well in the Essentials of Life, as in other Things. 'Tis usual with them to quit Employments, and to prefer a private and obscure Life to Honours and Pomp. As they enjoy Life better than in other Countries, so are they sooner surfeited, and less troubled in parting with it. Now I have given you an Idea of an *Englishman* of Merit, or an *Englishman* without Passions: A Mixture of Laziness and good Sense compleats his Character.

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There are however some Instances wherein it would seem as if Idleness ruled him absolutely. He hates Difficulties and working, and thinks himself unhappy when he is engaged in Things of that Kind; he is disheartened at such as are tedious, and resolves immediately to cut what he finds troublesome to unravel. He is credulous in what does not much concern him, and to save the Trouble of examining, easily believes every thing that is reported, which I believe is the Reason that we hear so much talk of Apparitions in this Country. I shall have an Opportunity hereafter to give you many Hints of their Laziness, and some of their good Sense. But when they lay Reason aside, (which happens sometimes) they run quite away from it, and then of all Men they are the least reasonable. They are violent in their Desires, impatient in ill Fortune, and little capable of finding a Remedy; furious in Anger, to a Degree of beating their Faces with their Fists, which they do sometimes on trifling Occasions, and on greater, proceed to more violent Resolutions. In a Word, the *English* keep no mean either in Good or Evil.

In Matters of Religion one would say that every *Englishman* is firmly resolved to have one after his own way, or none at all, and that their Country, to distinguish it from all others, is without Hypocrites. But allowing that should not be altogether true, it must at the same Time be acknowledged, that profess'd Libertines are not more numerous here than in other Countries, which is no way dishonourable to the Nation, since the very same People that would be Hypocrites elsewhere, are Libertines here, and 'tis easy to decide which is the worst of the two. There's in this Country a great Number of Fanatics,

ticks, or People so call'd. This proves more and more that the *English* can make resolutions to the Purpose: Some of those People broach extravagant Opinions in Religion. There are at the same Time a great many others, whose Piety is solid and rational. This appears by the great Number of devout Books, which no doubt are composed by People of Virtue: The Purity and Soundness of the Moral which they contain, are convincing Proofs that they are the Productions of the Religious — Besides, tho' some of those Books are universally applauded, yet the Authors conceal themselves, which is altogether inconsistent with the Views of the Learned.

The *English* support their Greatness without being intoxicated by it. I believe no one ever heard any of them cry out, *A Man of my Quality! A Person of my Rank!* Wealth sits very easy upon them; they never make an unseasonable Shew of their great Expences. No *Englishman* ever tired me with talking of his Coach and Equipage. They always keep good Tables; 'tis the first Thing they settle, and the last they retrench. Next follows a Mistress, who is maintain'd at a great Expence. But if I have not said enough already to satisfy you that Avarice is not the Vice of the *English*, and that they rather fall into the opposite, let the Physicians, the Lawyers, and the Astrologers be thrown into the Bargain; these are all in great Esteem with them, and thrive apace. Add to this, the Folly of Fashions, stately Tombs, and Pomp at Funerals, which cost great Sums. Here are likewise (as I am informed) Men and Women that are hired to mourn, and in my Opinion their Calling is much more necessary in this Country than among the Ancients; for since the *English* are
feldom

feldom touch'd with real Grief, and that there must be some Shew of it for Ceremony sake, they ought to be allow'd the Benefit of counterfeiting. I am inform'd they are somewhat hard hearted, except when they are moved by some extraordinary Passion, and then they often fall into the opposite Extream.

The changeable Humour of the Nation is likewise made Part of their Character, and some pretend to impute it to the Climate. But in my own Opinion they would not appear more unsteady than other People, were it not that they take less Pains to bridle their Thoughts, and dare let the World see what they really are; that is Idleness and Courage. And if it be objected that they change their Conduct with Regard to their Princes, it may be perhaps because their Princes, weary of living within just Bounds, alter their Measures, which obliges the People to alter theirs, in their Turn, and this may be sometimes prudent. There's still another Proof that the *English* are not so changeable as is imagined, 'tis because Advice has no Effect upon them, after they take a Resolution, which they often do rashly, and execute in the same Manner. This appears by the great Number of People that kill themselves, and of unequal Marriages.

This hasty way of resolving agrees so well with the Character of the Nation, that one may see Girls make Vows to marry the first Man they meet in the Streets, which they seldom fail of performing. 'Tis easy to discover in all these Things some little Remains of *Fierceness*, which is the Basis of their ancient Character. And in my Opinion they retain something from the different Nations that conquer'd them. They drink
like

like the *Saxons*, love hunting like the *Danes*, the *Normans* left them Chicanrie and false Witneses, and the *Romans* their Inclination for bloody Shews and Contempt of Death; if you would not rather consider the two last as the natural Effects of their Constitutions. Some of their Characters seem to be inconsistent; they are charitable, and they are cruel; they are lazy, and yet walk fast; sometimes they despise Strangers too much, and sometimes admire them too much: One would believe that they are all either Libertines or Devotees; and yet they are always ready to quarrel for some frivolous Ceremony in Worship, which does not agree with either of them. You may find many other Contradictions among them, which ought no way to surprize you; it proves them to be the same People I have described. Adieu, Sir, you know I am yours.



C

LETTER



LETTER II.



Still employ myself, Sir, in giving you my Thoughts of the *English*, and so much the more willingly, because you assure me that my last Letter gave you some Satisfaction : This will give you an Account of their Diversions, at least that of the Theatre, which is the most considerable.

The *English* pretend to excel in it ; they find Matter enough in the different ways of living of the People, and the rare Invention of their Poets, to surpass the Ancients and Moderns too ; thus some of them explain themselves on this Head. The Truth is, People are not a little pleas'd in reading their Works on every Subject, but themselves ; but an *Englishman* never fails to run into Extreame, and tire the Reader in talking of his own Nation, and especially when he thinks they excel in any thing. I will not undertake the Cause of the Ancients in this place ; I only say that every Man of Taste, that is pleas'd with what is natural, and acquainted with *Moliere*, will find but little Pleasure in reading the *English* Comedies, which are much oftener stuff'd with Rants of Wit and Obsceness, than with fine Passages that might be agreeable and useful. But 'tis from *Moliere* they would carry the Prize, and 'tis he they abuse. To vindicate him however in some Manner, and to give you at the same

same Time an Idea of the *English* Stage, I'll say something here of their Comedies; and if I should employ a whole Letter on the Subject, you must remember that Comedy is a privileged Trifle, and that even grave People have in all Times not only amused themselves, but likewise discoursed of it, with as much Seriousness as if it were an Affair of Moment.

Comedy has had its highest Period in *England*, as well as in *France*: *Ben. Johnson*, that lived in the Beginning of this Century, is the Poet that carried it farthest. Let it be him that the *English* would prefer to *Moliere*, I agree to it, since they must prefer themselves to the rest of the World on every Subject; we are however obliged to them for making choice of so great a Man to carry away the Prize. But if I might be dispensed with from submitting to the Decision of these Gentlemen, and durst give my Opinion in the Controversy, without running too great a Risque, I would say that *Ben. Johnson*, tho' undoubtedly a great Poet in some Respects, is yet inferiour to *Moliere* in many Things. In my Opinion he had less Wit, and was less natural; he was a Stranger to every Kind of Gallantry, he brought a great Number of Mechanicks on the Stage, and among all his Plays there are but three or four very good: He makes a Man hide himself under a great Tortoise Shell, and to pass for the Creature. (b) Whereas the Sack with which they reproach *Moliere* is seen only in a Farce, and has nothing in it improbable. In a Word, he had not Courage enough to attack the Faults of his Country; and it may be well said of him, that he did much good to Comedy, but

none to the *English*. There's one Thing however to be offer'd in his Favour; that *Moliere* had more proper Materials for the Stage. The Characters in *France* are general, and comprehend an entire Order or Rank of People; but in *England*, where every one lives according to his Fancy, the Poet can hardly find any thing but particular Characters, which are very numerous, and can never produce any great Effect. After all, it must be acknowledged that *Ben. Johnson* was a very judicious Poet, and that he distinguishes and supports his Characters to Admiration, and that his good Plays are excellent in their Kind. But let us drop their good Poets, 'tis not those they set up against *Moliere*; I am to defend him only against the Poets of our own Days, that dare pretend to excel him; and to effect it, I need do no more than let you know what the *English* Stage is at this Time.

Here are great Numbers of new Plays, which three or four Authors take Care to furnish, one after another. The Third Time of acting is for the Author's Benefit, and it would seem as if this alone had more Influence on the Play, than either the Variety of their ways of living, or the singular Invention of the Poet. From this proceeds his extraordinary Care to please the Crowd, and to find so many idle Stories that the very *Footmen* part with their Money to hear them; this he performs with so much Success, that I dare venture to say, it may be alledg'd as a Reason, among others, that Comedy is one of the Sources of Corruption in *London*: 'Tis there the Women learn not to be frighted at an Intrigue, but on the contrary to carry it on successfully: 'Tis there that young People are made familiar with Vice, which is always represented

as a Thing indifferent, and never as Vice. They game, swear, and drink, debauch Women, and fight; and the honest Man of the Play, as well as others, without any Distinction, does all this; or to speak more properly, the Play has no honest Man distinguished from others by that Character, and there can be no more said in his Favour than that he is more genteelly wicked than the rest. I know very well that Comedy is a Picture of Life, and that all these Things may be represented in it; but 'tis no less true that painting of Manners has this Advantage, that it may either approve or reject a Thing after the same way 'tis represented; and that every Poet that is ignorant of this, or that neglects it, has no great Skill, or at least no great Esteem for Virtue. 'Tis true we often see Folly turn'd into Ridicule in the *English* Comedies; but the Poet, for the most Part, goes a hunting for it into other Countries, and he that is expos'd is a *Frenchman*, or an *Englishman* very fond of *French* Manners. If they attack any of their own Faults, they are such as are so very singular and extravagant, that they are known no where but on the Stage; so that the *English* Comedy is of no Benefit. Now let us see whether there be any thing in't to please, and if it be true that the *English* Wit, and *English* Genius, as their Authors call it, has so great an Advantage over the *French Bagatelle*. Don't you laugh, Sir, to see me take the Business so much to Heart, and handle it as if it were an Affair of Importance? 'tis because the *English* shew a great deal of Presumption on this Head, and that oftentimes produces Seriousness, even in Trifles. Besides, the Subject pleases me, because 'tis not important; and tho' I should persuade you that they don't excel in their Comedies

so much as they imagine, I'll do them no great Harm.

Nothing (if I mistake not) contributes more to promote the Diversion of the Stage, than to imitate Nature with so much Justness, as that Art may no way be discover'd, that the Poet be forgot, that the Audience be wholly taken up with the Persons of the Play, and that they relate to them the very Things they say and do. The *English* Comedies have nothing of this Perfection; the Poet is always heard above the Actor. If you have ever been at Puppet Shews, imagine to yourself a bungling Manager, that can't proportion his Voice for any Time to those little Figures, but lets himself be heard in his natural Tone, by which the whole Trick is discover'd, and so the Enchantment vanishes. The Conduct of the *English* Poet is of a Piece with this; he undeceives the Audience every Moment, by his far fetch'd Thoughts, and obliges them, against their Will, to perceive that he assists in the Performance. The *English* however value themselves much for this Luxuriancy of Invention; they say that a *French* Poet would spread over a whole Play, the Thoughts that are hardly sufficient for one Act of theirs, and they have Reason to say so; and perhaps the *French* have Reason on their Side too. There's no doubt but the *English* excel in Things that don't require Discretion or Management; the Discourses, for Example, and their bold and happy Thoughts, of which I believe they have a greater Number than any other People. But the Over-fruitfulness of Invention is not the only Reason that their Comedies fail of pleasing; there are other Faults, no less considerable. I can tell you of some of them on Occasion of *Moliere's Miser*, which was translated by

by one of their famous Poets, and I am now going to amuse you with it, for a Minute. Here is the Beginning of the Preface.

"The Foundation of this Play I took from one of *Moliere's* call'd *L'Avare*; but that having too few Persons, and too little Action for an *English Theatre*, I added to both so much, that I may call more than half of this Play my own; and I think I may say without Vanity, that *Moliere's* Part of it has not suffer'd in my Hands; nor did I ever know a *French Comedy* made use of by the worst of our Poets, that was not better'd by 'em. 'Tis not Barrenness of Wit or Invention that makes us borrow from the *French*, but Laziness; and this was the Occasion of my making use of *L'Avare, &c.*" These new Persons he speaks of act a Kind of a Farce; to make a young Man drunk, cheat him of his Money, and then marry him to a Whore. This is half of the Play which the Author claims with so much Modesty, and which, I believe, no one will ever jumble with the other. I never thought before this Time, that the Unity of the Subject was look'd upon as a Fault in a Play, and that its Beauty consisted in a great Number of Persons. But I submit it to the Judgment of the Learned.

The Prologue has the same Design, and pretty near the same Force with the Preface. Here's a small Part of it:

"*French Plays*, in which true Wit's as rarely
 " found
 " As Mines of Silver are in *English* Ground;
 " A foolish Marquis, or his knavish Man,
 " Or some poor Pudden Fool's the best they can.

Will any one ever believe that a Translator could make a Reflection of this Kind, or that a Play of *Moliere's* would give any room for it? There could be no more said of any insipid *French* Comedy of these Times. But perhaps you are impatient to see something of this true *English* Wit. The Author, foreseeing that these great Preparations would have a suitable Effect on the Reader, has endeavour'd to please him; he begins with a Scene entirely of his own Contrivance, and since we are so far advanced on the Subject, I here present you with a Translation of it,

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter Rant, Hazard, and Theodore.

" *Rant.* What a Devil makes thee in so musty
 " a Humour? Thou art as dull and dumpish as
 " a Fellow, that had been drunk over Night with
 " Ale, and had done nothing but drank Coffee,
 " talk'd Politicks, and read *Gazettes* all this
 " Morning.

" *Haz.* Hast thou lost thy Money or thy
 " Wench?

" *Rant.* Nay 'faith, *Hazard*, if he has lost his
 " Money, I am sure he has lost his Wench, in
 " spite of the noble Virtue of Constancy.

" *Haz.* Come, *Theodore*, a lucky Hand or
 " two at the Groom-Porter's will get thee as
 " good a Mistress as any about the Town.

" *Rant.* No, pox on't! they are kept so high
 " by foolish elder Brothers, that poor younger
 " Brothers must despair of 'em.

" *Haz.* No, *Rant*, thou art mistaken; the el-
 " der Brothers are so kind to keep 'em for the
 " younger,

younger, that cannot do't for themselves; they are civil to the one for Love, and the other for Money.

" *Rant.* I am not of your Opinion; there was never so much ready Money, and so little Love stirring, as at this time.

" *Haz.* Faith then we (that have but shallow Purfes) must three or four club for one; she'll serve us all, considering how we drink. Come, *Theodore*, be not melancholy; if thou hast lost thy Mistress, I'll club with thee for another.

" *Theod.* So, Gentlemen, this Dialogue runs off very smartly; you had rehearsed it before: But I find you have the Effects of last Night's Debauch upon you, and are hot-headed this Morning, what else should make you think me Melancholy?

" *Rant.* Come, 'faith, thou art.

" *Theod.* I must confess, Gentlemen, I am not in so brisk a Humour as to leap over Joint-stools, or come over a Stick for the King, or any of those pretty Frolicks; but I have no Trouble, unless you will create me one.

" *Haz.* I am so far from that, that I'll tell thee News that will rejoice the Heart of thee, if thou wert as dumpish as a young Spark that is newly denied to be trusted with a white Periwig.

" *Theod.* Prythee, what's that?

" *Rant.* That which I am sure you'll bite at.

" *Haz.* There is the most delicate, charming Creature, come to lie over-against us, in *Bow-street*! Oh 'tis a melting Girl! she looks as if she would dissolve like an Anchovy in Claret.

" *Rant.* She would relish better (when a Man has the hot fit upon him) than Small-beer in a Fever.

Haz.

“ *Haz.* Than Small-beer, a pox on’t! she
 “ would be more welcome to thee than a Re-
 “ prievè would, if thou wert just now trolling
 “ out *Hopkins* and *Sternhold* upon a Ladder.

“ *Theod.* You are mighty witty, and full of
 “ Similies; but who the Devil is this incompa-
 “ rable Lady?

“ *Rant.* Pox on’t! thou art as testy as an old
 “ lean Judge fasting, upon the Bench, between
 “ eleven and twelve.

But this is not half the Scene. True Wit costs this Author so little, that he fills whole Pages with it, without any trouble. As for my Part, I find him somewhat too prolix, and not being over fond of translating, I cannot follow him any further. There’s the turn of the *English* Comedy of our Times. The Thoughts are generally better, but there’s always swearing, idle Stories, and Comparisons in abundance. These last please them more than any thing else: There’s such a Profusion of them in this Play, that there’s nothing in’t even to (c) *Brin D’Avoine* and *la Merluche* but are made to speak by Comparisons. *Maitre Jaques* has some: As for *Elise*, the House-Maid, she has no less than half a dozen one after another. By reading this you must know enough of their Comparisons, and I am persuaded it will be some Pleasure to you to hear no more of them. But I must shew you some of the Alterations that made the Author say, *Moliere* had lost nothing in his Hands; which is a modest way of insinuating that he gain’d by the Bargain.

When

(c) *Brin D’Avoine*, *la Merluche*, *Maitre Jaques*, and *Elise* are Persons in *Moliere’s* *Avare*.

When the Miser's Son is inform'd, that his Father was going to marry his Mistress, he complains of being ill. In *Moliere*, the Father sends him to the Kitchen to drink a large Glass of fresh Water. We in *France* think this is agreeable to the Character of a Miser, and that the whole Passage is extraordinary: But it is not so here; for Water does not relish much with the *English*, not even in Comedy; and their Poet, who is much more delicate than *Moliere*, instead of an insipid Glass of Water, ingeniously makes use of a Glass of Brandy.

When *Frosine* applauds the Frugality of *Mariacine*, and would persuade *Harpagon* that she is Portion enough of herself, *Harpagon* replies, that such things are not solid, and that he would be glad to touch something. In the *French*, *Frosine* answers: Ah! you shall touch enough, and afterwards is in haste to tell him, that there's a certain Country where his Mistress has an Estate, that he will be Master of. But an *English* Poet can't part with this Business of touching so soon; they that go a great way for an idle Story, take care not to neglect one they find ready to their Hands. Now you shall see what *Moliere* has gained by this Gentleman. *Frosine* answers: Touch! how? You shall certainly touch her, and you shall touch every where, and as much as you please, she is a pretty Creature to touch, there's a touch for you. By these two Alterations you may judge of the rest.

There are a thousand little ways of pleasing dispers'd thro' *Moliere's* Plays, which are insipid to people without a Genius; 'tis these ways that make *Moliere* what he is. Were I not afraid that the Business would carry us too far, I could easily let you see that the *English* Author has drop'd

a great many of them in his Translation, whether thro' Disdain, or want of Taste, or that for good Reasons he would not have the People relish them, and tho' there were nothing else in the Play, it will still fall short in *English* of what 'tis in the Original. The Truth on't is, most of the *English* Poets don't know how to make an agreeable use of a Trifle: They heap Thoughts upon Thoughts, and generally without either Choice, or Delicacy; and they over-look, for the most Part, all Circumstances that are not within a narrow Compass, as well as a certain familiar Language which is in Nature, and which *Moliere* knew how to employ in the most agreeable Manner.

But to prove in good Earnest, that the *English* Comedies of our Time are not so good as *Moliere's*, is, in my Opinion, the way to expose the last to Danger; for these Gentlemen set too high a Value on theirs, they surprize us, and would make us give more than we have a Mind to do. They have what they call *Humour*, and pretend 'tis all their own; and tho' we should give it up to them, they would still fall short of what they think themselves to be. This Humour is much the same thing as jesting with the *French*, and exactly what we call (d) *Einfall*. But not to lose any time about the signification of the Word, it seems they mean by it, a certain Fruitfulness of Imagination, which for the most part tends to overthrow the Ideas of Things, turning Virtue into Ridicule, and making Vice agreeable. If I am not much mistaken, 'tis the Property of a good Play, to correct as well as to please; and I shall

(d) The Author was a Swiss, as is observed before in the Preface.

shall always look upon both together to be the chief end of Comedy, and where-ever I find it in esteem, I expect to see the People more prudent, at least in some respects, and more polite. I consider the Stage as something that takes away Ridicule, and it gives me some Pain to see Comedy diffuse it. *Moliere* was the Scourge of Ridicule in his Country; that is his great Encomium, and all the World knows how much France is obliged to him on that account. If England had had its *Moliere*, in the room of all these Poets with their *Humour*, perhaps she might be cured of some great Ridicule; for Example, the little Care they take to conceal their Contempt of the rest of the World; to take it away entirely is, I believe, above the reach of Comedy; but as to their ways of shewing it, I am persuaded if a skilful Poet would undertake the task, a great many well-bred People among them would not be reproach'd on that account, and they would at the same time be made sensible, that their Nation has its Faults as well as others. Let me now say a Word of their Tragedies, and I'll have done.

If the *English* could resolve to be more natural in their Tragedies, and to study the Language of Nature more than they do, they would, no doubt, excel all *Europe*. *England* is a Country that affords a large Scene of Passions, and Catastrophes, and *Shakespear*, one of their best ancient Poets, has put a great part of their History into his Tragedies. Besides, the Genius of the Nation inclines to Seriousness; their Language is bold and concise, and such as is necessary to express the Passions. This is the Reason that their Tragedies excel in a great Number of the Passages; but they have the same Faults, if not

not more, in my Opinion, than their Comedies. The Heroes of Antiquity are disguis'd, as they are in *France*; — We see *Hanibal* with a full bottom Wig powder'd, under his Helmet, Ribbons on his Coat of Mail, and holding his Sword with a fringed Glove. The Plays, as well as the Persons, are a Mixture of the Comic and the Serious; the most melancholy Events and the merriest Farce follow one another by turns; which, in my Opinion, is not only ill contriv'd, but entirely inconsistent with the end of Tragedy. In short, most of the Executions represented in the Play, are done on the Stage, which is sometimes cover'd with dead Bodies. I am told, *Oedipus* appears with his Eyes burst. I have seen them pinch a Man on a Cross for half an hour. In my Opinion, Poets that have a great Genius, and know how to work the Passions, ought not to have recourse to Pincers. And they can have no Pretence to excuse themselves on account of the People's Taste for Shews of that kind, since they have been labouring for Ages to improve it; and surely the least good they could do to the *English*, was to fit their Gust for the Stage.

There's another Thing less excusable in their Tragedies, and that is their constant Attacks on the *French* Authors, that do them no other Ill than to excel them. The chief of their Tragick Poets of our Time treats *Corneille* much after the same Manner as *Shadwell* does *Moliere*, that is, by plundering and making Prefaces to abuse him. But I will not enter into a particular Examination of this Subject, nor do I think there's any Occasion for it; the Character I have given already is sufficient: And these Gentlemen, that
give

give their Heroes such sublime Sentiments, have
out low ones themselves; and in their Plays,
where they make Strangers speak, the Language
is far different from that of their Prefaces, where
they speak themselves; and it may be said, that
it is their Custom to laugh at Honesty and Vir-
tue, and that they think neither has any proper
Station but the Stage.



LETTER



LETTER III.



WE are still, Sir, on the Subject of the *English* Recreations, and you should have known before this Time what I had to say on that Head, if poor injured *Moliere* had not met me upon the Road.

The *English* have their Opera's too, but they don't make any great Noise about them, nor will I say much on the Subject. The Musick seems to me to be but indifferent, the Machines are near as good as those at *Paris*, the Decorations are fine, but above all, that made of Sattin is extraordinary magnificent. They don't dance as well as the *French*; but, on the other Hand, they dance less frequently, and perhaps more to the Purpose. The same Thing may be said of their singing; they sing only the *Airs*, and rehearse the rest. There's something uncommon and agreeable in these *Airs*, and in my Opinion is more suitable to the Taste of melancholy People than others.

They have set Concerts of Musick for certain Days of the Week, which People go to hear for Money, and in my Judgment it exceeds that of their Opera's; perhaps 'tis because the Musicians are not streighten'd in the Compositions by the Poet. The People of Quality of both Sexes never fail to be at these Concerts, whither they carry a Taste altogether peculiar: They are
charm'd

harm'd with the Noise of Trumpets and Kettle-Drums; at least the Musicians justify themselves on that Account for using such noisy Instruments in close Places. I was often pleas'd at these Meetings, to observe the Confusion among the Men, who seem'd astonish'd to find themselves in a Place where they could neither game nor drink, and there being none but modest Women, they durst take no Liberties, nor could they find any subject for Discourse. The Women, on the other Hand, were highly pleas'd with gaining Respect, (the Thing in the World they like best) and looking on one another. This Kind of Behaviour has this Advantage, that it gives People an Opportunity of hearing the Musick without Noise.

The young Men of Quality have Meetings of their own, much after the same Manner, without Mirth or much polite or regular Conversation. They are generally at Chocolate-Houses, which are something more esteem'd than the Coffee-Houses. The People that the *English* call *Beaus*, are a Kind of a Copy of your *French* Marquis, but not quite so impertinent, for they don't take so much Pains to be heard, as to be seen. 'Tis not likely they can thrive much in a Country of good Sense, where whimsical Postures or Ways, or an odd fashion'd Suit of Cloaths, are but little minded, or esteem'd; and where a Man that is nothing but Out-side, and that has no other Employment but himself, runs the risque of passing for a Fool, rather than a pretty fellow.

The ordinary Amusements of the *English* are, Wine, Women, and Dice, or, in a Word, Debauchery. They are not nice at least in the two first, which they join together, without either Delicacy or Agreeableness: One may say, that
D they

they drink for drinking sake, and their *Whores* must drink after the same Manner, and they are highly pleas'd to find any that can keep up with them. These Debauches continue a long Time, and are sometimes carry'd very far; some have been so extravagant as to swear they would kill the first Man they met in the Streets, and they were as good as their words. Two young Men were hang'd for it; but meeting none in the Street, it being two in the Morning, they call'd at a House, and kill'd the Man that came to open the Door: I have seen a Man of Quality that had a Pardon for a Murder of the same Kind. But their Diversions would be dangerous tho' they were not so extravagant as these. The Women of Pleasure they pass their Time with are often so much injur'd, that without making any Vows, they kill the first Man they meet, when he is mad enough to deal with them. 'Tis alledg'd that Canary and Rosa-solis, which they drink in great Quantities, is the Reason that some Distempers are so frequent, and so hard to be cur'd, in *London*. 'Tis incredible to think what a Number of those Creatures are in that City, and that the Men should be so little asham'd of being seen in their Company; they are common in every Respect. These frequent Excesses contribute, no doubt, to make the *English* melancholy and passionate, as we see they are: But I don't pretend to carry this Point further than it ought to be. If many of them are what I have painted them, there are a great many others of a contrary Disposition, and no doubt deserve the Encomium of *Civil and Sober Gentlemen*, which is given them by the Publick.

The *English* take much Pleasure in walking, and are particular in this, that they always walk fast,

fast, nor can a Man preserve his Health in *Eng-*
land without stirring much; the Air is very
thick, and a moderate Exercise will not be suffi-
cient. But I believe few of them take any No-
tice of this, however the Custom of walking fast
may well be imputed to it. Walking is like-
wise a great Diversion among the Ladies, and
their Manner of doing it is one way of knowing
their Character; desiring only to be seen, they
walk together, for the most part, without
speaking: They are always dress'd, and always
stiff; they go forward constantly, and nothing
can amuse or put them out of their way: I
doubt they would not stoop to take up a Flower
from under their Feet: I never saw any of them lie
on the Grass, nor shew the least Inclination to
singing. They are strangers to walking in the cool
of the Evening; and it may be said, that they
have no Pleasure but in being seen; and that
they would not find any even in a fine day,
were it not that it sets off their Finery to more
Advantage, and that they are in hopes of meet-
ing those they would shew themselves to: But
whether this is more peculiar to *English* Women
than Women in general, may be a Question.
Yet notwithstanding all their Care to be seen,
they are seldom Coquets; nor have they any ri-
diculous Affectations or bold Ways. Their Air
is so modest (laying aside their great Number of
Patches) that a Man is sometimes under a Temp-
tation of telling a Woman that she is handsome,
to have the Pleasure of letting her know it.

They take the Air in Coaches in a small Cir-
cle, or Ring, made in an open Field, and rail'd:
The Coaches roll gently about, some on one side,
and some on another, which at a little distance
looks like a pleasant Riding-house; but near

hand one may see clearly, that they come there only to see and be seen. But this Amusement does not begin even in the hottest Part of the Summer, till the day is spent, when walking is pleasant; then every one goes away, as having nothing more to do. Add to this the Comedy and Concerts of Musick, of which I have given you an Account already, and where they go to be seen by Candle-light, and you have exactly the outward Manner of living of the *London Dames*.

I have been curious to know whether they had any better Amusements than publick Shews or Walking, in which I inform'd myself by *Englishmen* of my Acquaintance. If you had been in my Place, you would, no doubt, have address'd yourself to the *English Ladies* themselves, to know the Truth. Your brown People are most esteem'd in *England*, the fair are too common. What I have discover'd on this Subject is, that the Women easily fall in Love, that they are not at much Pains to conceal it, and that they are capable of taking violent Resolutions in Favour of a Lover; soft and gentle nevertheless, without Nicety, or Art, easy in Conversation, and little injured by the Tenderneſs of the Men, who bestow but a very small Part of their Time upon them. In Effect, most of them prefer Wine and Gaming to Women, in which they are the more blameable, because the Women are much better than the Wine in *England*. But when the Men are enamour'd, 'tis with great Passion, Love with them is not a Weakness to be ashamed of; 'tis an Affair of Seriousness and Importance; and the Design very often is either to succeed, or to part with Reason or Life.

But

But generally when they go after the fair Ladies, they take but little Pains to let them understand that they will not be indebted to them for their Favours. They are lazy even in Love; and never look farther than at easy Pleasures. A good Fortune with them is that which is got without Trouble. *London* is, no doubt, the City in the World, where your lazy Debochees are best accommodated with the Means of pleasing themselves. But in case it were not so, the *English* don't seem to be cut out for any other kind of Gallantry: They know no Mean between an entire Familiarity, and a profound Silence; but their good Sense will not suffer the last to be overtroublesome to them. I have seen, among People of Quality, Pipes and Tobacco carry'd to the Table after an Entertainment, the Women retire, and the Men see them go away quietly, as they were filling their Pipes.

There's yet a much greater Fault, which the *English* Women have Reason to complain of, and that is, that most of the Husbands keep Mistresses. Some have carry'd them home, and made them eat at the same Table with their Wives, and yet no Mischief happen'd. I believe, if they had a Mind they would make them lie in the same Bed, and I don't know whether there have not been some that thought of it. After this, the *English* may, no doubt, boast to have the best Wives in the World. And most Men will envy them as much on that account, as for their Beauty. There's another thing very extraordinary, and which is no small Proof of the *English* Women's Goodness, that these Mistresses suffer but little in their Reputation: They have been seen even in Company with the Wives, and if there's any Distinction, 'tis that they are handsomer for

the most part, better dress'd, and less starch'd. In other Places, this alone might be sufficient to make the Wives shun them; but here all Occasions of Jealousy put together, produce nothing; which is so extraordinary, considering Women's Temper, that if you won't believe me on my Word, I can't take it ill. I believe, indeed, that 'tis thro' pure Goodness, that the married Women suffer these Mistresses; yet 'tis not impossible but there may be some other View, and that the marry'd Women are unwilling to use the others with Severity, lest by so doing, they might happen to make an ill Precedent, which would afterwards turn upon themselves; for tho' the strong Inclination of the *English* is for easy Gallantries, there are, however, some of another Sort, and Intrigues are common enough in *London*. Every thing seems to lead the Inhabitants to it: Impunity, the Greatness of the Town, easy Husbands, lazy Wives, their great Inclination to read Things that are amorous, or idle Stories, and nothing else. Such as *Rochester's* Works, which are contemptible for their Indecency, but otherwise ingenious. I have had them twice, and lost them as often in Houses where some Women happen'd to be my fellow Lodgers. To this may be added, licentious Comedy, and the little Conversation between the Men and the Women.

The common People have a great many Diversions, which may serve to let them know themselves. Some have the Appearance of Fierceness: As that of throwing at Cocks at some Distance, Another great Diversion is, to see either Men or Beasts fighting, where there's always Blood shed, There's another, very troublesome and insolent; this is Foot-ball, where they take

great deal of Pleasure in breaking Windows, and Coach Glasses if they meet any; or when there's any publick Rejoicings, they make a Game, and toss People, passing by, to and again. Many of these Diversions are Proof of their happy Condition, since even some of the Grandees partake of them. You may see Blue Garters pass the Time at Bowls with Tradesmen, without any Distinction, which shews not only that Greatness among the *English* is no hindrance to Amusements, but likewise that it does not consist in the Contempt of the Populace, or keeping them at a distance, as 'tis in other Nations; and that they don't think their Grandeur expos'd, since the Dignity of Man, which is much greater, is not expos'd by ordinary Recreations. Likewise in their Dances, which require a great Number of People, I am told, that in the Country, when there's not Company enough, they make use of their Servants without any difficulty to make up the Set. There's nothing more requir'd in these Dances, than to place the Parties in Order, after different ways, and that they follow one after another: This gives an Opportunity to bashful young People to be soon acquainted, and that, perhaps, was the End of inventing them.

The Pleasures of the Table, in this happy Nation, may be put in the same Rank with the ordinary, every one is accusom'd to good eating. It consists chiefly in a variety of Puddings, *Golden-Pippins*, which is an excellent kind of Apples, delicious green Oysters, and Roast-Beef, which is the favourite Dish as well at the King's Table as at a Tradesman's; 'tis common to see one of these Pieces weigh from twenty to thirty Pound, and from thirty to forty: And this may be said

to be (as it were) the Emblem of the Prosperity and Plenty of the *Engliſh*.

The Diversion of taking the Air on the *Thames*, and Scolding, muſt not be forgot. 'Tis common among all ſorts of People, Men and Women, People of Quality as well as others. The Water-men, who muſt have a Share of the Sport, boaſt of the ſeveral Advantages they had obtain'd that way, among others, how they put K. *Charles II.* out of Countenance, by calling him *Chimney Sweeper*. That Prince took much Pleaſure in making himſelf familiar with all the World, which is the chief Reaſon that his Memory is ſtill ſo dear to the People; his Countenance was black, and having procur'd a Tax to be laid on Chimneys, it gave ſome Diſguſt. Going one Day by Water, and being engag'd in a Scolding-match, ſome Water-men hit upon that, which ſtopp'd his Mouth immediately. This gave them a great deal of Pleaſure, and made ſome amends for the Tax. You muſt know, by the way, that no Abufe is ſo common, or outrageous in their Eyes, as that of *French Dog*; one may hear them ſay it both by Land and Water, and to all ſorts of Strangers as well as the *French*, and I am perſuaded they think to aggravate the Title of *Dog*, by coupling it with the Word *French*, ſo much do they hate and deſpiſe our Nation; while ſome of theſe *Frenchmen*, on the other Hand, may perhaps find in that very thing ſome Reparation for the Abufe, as valuing themſelves at a high Rate, and looking on the *French* Name to be glorious: Thus Nations are poſſeſs'd with Self-love, which is often as ridiculous as that of private People. Let us now return to the *Engliſh* Recreations, particularly ſuch as give room
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to reproach them with having still some Remains of their ancient Fierceness.

Some of these Diversions are owing to the innate Courage of the Animals of the Country, as that of Cock-fighting. Their Dogs are, I believe, the boldest in the World, and (if the Term may be used) the least bragging. They neither bark nor bite; they fight to Death without any Noise. One may see some of these Creatures dragging along a broken Leg, and returning to the Charge. I am assur'd that one of them, in King Charles II's time, kill'd a Lion, and that it has been proved by Experience, that such as are of a true breed will suffer their Legs to be cut off, one after another, without letting go their hold. If I durst, I would readily say, that there's a strong Resemblance in many things between the *English* and their Dogs. Both are silent, head-strong, lazy, unfit for Fatigue, no way quarrelsome, intrepid, eager in fight, insensible of blows, and incapable of parting. There are however some that pretend to find this difference, that out of *England* the Dogs are vicious, but the Men more tractable.

Cock-fighting is diverting enough, the Anger, and Eagerness of these little Creatures, and the triumphant Crowing of a Cock when he struts haughtily on the Body of his Enemy, has something in't singular and pleasant. What renders these Shews less agreeable is, the great Number of Wagerers, who appear as angry as the Cocks themselves, and make such a Noise, that one would believe every Minute they were going to fight; but Combats among the Men are another kind of Diversion, where the Spectators are more peaceable.

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The Assailants begin with running against each other, Heads foremost, like Rams, and afterwards come to Boxing. By the Laws of the Play (as they call it) a Man is not to strike his Adversary on the Ground, but must give him time to rise; and the Standers-by take care to see these Laws strictly observed. They never part till one of them calls for Quarter, which they don't do till they are quite disabled. These Combats are in great esteem among the *English*, and very diverting not only to the Men but to the Women likewise. One may see Mothers bring their Sons, and married Women encourage their Husbands to engage: And Persons of Quality lay aside their Swords, Wigs, and Neckcloaths to box, when they are insulted by mean People, against whom they must not draw their Swords. For if a Man should happen to do so against any Person whatever, he would run the Risque of being knock'd down by the Mob, which is the Reason that there are no *Bullies* in *London*. And such as are pleased with Conflicts of this Kind, may easily indulge their Taste by turning Prize-fighters. There are now and then some of them in this City; but none since my coming, or at least I have not seen any.

I believe the Execution of Criminals may be put in the same Rank with their *ferce* Diversions: This returns every six Weeks regularly with the Sessions. The Criminals pass thro' the City in Carts, dress'd in their best Cloaths, with white Gloves, and Nose-gays, if it be the Season. Those that die merrily, or that don't at least shew any great Fear of Death, are said to die like Gentlemen; and to merit this Encomium, most of them die like *Beasts*, without any Concern, or like Fools, for having no other View
than

than to divert the Crowd. One of these Wretches, being come to the Place of Execution, desir'd to speak to some of his Neighbours that he happen'd to see in the Throng. They came to him, and then he told them, that he was unwilling to die without asking their Forgiveness for a great Injury he had done them. They answer'd, that they forgave him heartily, but that they could not imagine what it could be. The Thief seem'd to be in much haste to tell it, and at last own'd that he had to do with their Wives, which had troubled him very much. Another lately made the Cart stop before a Tavern Door, and ask'd the Man of the House whether he had not lost a silver Ewer: The Man told him he had been robb'd of one very lately. Make us drink, then said the Thief, and I'll tell you where 'tis. The Tavern-man being transported with the News, made a great deal of haste to treat him, and he treats his Companions; and before the Cart mov'd away, he told the Tavern-man very calmly, 'twas I took away your Ewer, and you shall have it again when I come back. They have been observ'd to put their white Gloves into their Pockets on the Way, lest they should be injur'd by the Rain, and made unfit to appear at Tyburn. Something of this Kind happens at most Executions, and four or five Thieves are generally honour'd with Elogies. Tho' there's something very melancholy in this, yet a Man can't well forbear laughing to see these Rogues set themselves off for Heroes, by an Affectation of despising Death.

There's not the least Appearance of any Alteration in the Faces of some of them, which is a much stronger Proof of their being under no Concern, than all these Bravadoes. One can't observe

observe either Fear or Paleness; nor could these Malefactors be distinguish'd from others, were it not for their Finery, and the Ropes about their Necks. I have been sometimes considering what might be the Source of this Insensibility, which appears to me very extraordinary; but I could never account for it. I believe, indeed, that the frequent Executions, the great Numbers that suffer together, and the Applauses of the Crowd, may contribute something to it. The Brandy which they swallow before their setting out, helps to stun them; but all this would have no Effect on any other People, so that the *English* must be influenced by some stronger Reasons to be deduced from their Constitutions. I am assur'd that 'tis usual to see their Parents or Friends pull them by the Feet while they are hanging, in order to put a speedy End to their Pain, which is very extraordinary.

You must know, the *English* die by their own hands with as much indifference as by another's: 'Tis common to hear People talk of Men and Women, that make away with themselves, as they call it, and generally for Reasons that would appear to us but as Trifles: The Men, perhaps, for the Cruelty or *Inconstancy* of their Mistresses; and the Women for the Indifferency of the Men. Last Year, in the space of fifteen Days, three Girls hang'd themselves for some Uneasiness in their Amours; and the People that told me of it, did not seem to be so much concern'd at the thing, as that two of them should do it for the sake of *Irishmen*, whom they despise very much, and look upon as People incapable of Love. Not long since, a young Man, and an only Son, drew a Pistol out of his Pocket, and shot himself thro' the Head in his Father's Presence,

ence, because he refus'd him Money: A Man of Figure did something of the same Kind to vex his Wife: He comply'd with every thing she demanded upon Marriage, but being afterwards dissatisfy'd with her, and knowing her to be very covetous, he told her he would play her a Trick, and this Trick was to go and hang himself; thinking by that, to have her Estate (which was considerable) forfeited to the King, as is usual on like Occasions. Hanging, it seems, was formerly much in Fashion, but now cutting of Throats is more modish.

An extraordinary thing of this kind happen'd very lately, and tho' it be melancholy enough, yet it made the whole Town laugh. A *Frenchman* that liv'd a long time in *England*, and thought he was *English* in every Article, resolv'd to kill himself in a Fit of Chagrin. He made choice, as you may well imagine, of the modish way of Dying, and proceeded so far as to give himself a cut with a Razor; but being frighten'd to see his own Blood, and suddenly changing his Resolution, he had Recourse to the Surgeons, but they could not save him; and so he died in their Hands, to the great Joy of the *English*, who made themselves very merry with it: They go roundly to work on such Occasions, and never retreat. To the Proofs I have already given on this Subject, which may perhaps be too many, I must add two more, which seem to be uncommon.

An old Lord, not long since, endeavour'd to cut his own Throat, but wanting Strength to do it to the purpose, his Servants happen'd to come into the Room in the mean time unexpectedly, and being in Hopes of saving him, they run to the Surgeon's, but the old Man being fix'd in his

his Resolution, thrust two of his Fingers into the Wound, widen'd it, and then died. The same Week, if I am not mistaken, an Officer belonging to the Tower, being much concern'd for his Wife's running away with her Gallant, flung himself from a Balcony into the Street, by which his Legs were broke. He was carried immediately to be dress'd; but before it could be done, he took a Knife out of his Pocket and kill'd himself. These People seem to contradict an Observation that is made, as if those who resolve to fall by their own Hands, are however capable of being surpriz'd, and even willing to live, when they are under an Apprehension of dying after any other Mode, than that they made choice of. The Author of that Reflection, who knew Men very well, did not know the *English*, for 'tis certain they will die some way or another, when they have taken a Resolution, as they often do on small Occasions. 'Tis difficult to know the Source of this Singularity, if it be not what I have already hinted to you in their Character: They are violent in Passion, (that is) they are resolved to succeed; proud withal, and incapable of bearing ill Fortune, or mending it; and, in a Word, too melancholy for any Business but their Chagrin; and tho' they are less influenced by Custom than other Nations, yet they suffer very much by it on this Occasion: So many Examples of voluntary Death before their Eyes, seem to encourage them, as the *Roman* Matron did her Husband, saying, *O! Pate, there's no Pain in it.* 'Tis, no doubt, very unhappy that such Madness should get in among them, and be look'd upon as a piece of Prudence even by good People. *He was weary of Life, he*
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is got out of it, says one of them, when he was told that his only Son had jump'd into the *Thames* and was drown'd. They part with Life generally much after the same Manner, calmly, and with a good Grace. 'Tis true, indeed, they take care to enjoy it first, by shunning Business, and every Thing that is troublesome. This is the *English Art* of Living, which is something more important than a Man's retiring handsomely from a Visit.

Now I have said enough of Murder, in a Letter that treats of Diversions, the small Remnant of Fierceness which is still in the Nation lead me to it. I would not have you any way offended at this Word; it insinuates, no doubt, something very odious to Strangers, but at the same time it produces a great many good Effects among the *English*. 'Tis to this Fierceness, which can bear nothing, and is jealous of every thing, that they owe their chief Happiness, their Liberty. 'Tis by this that the People, tho' divided and plunged in Prosperity, and Idleness, recover in a Minute all their Strength and forget their Disputes, to oppose unanimously every thing that tends to subdue them. In other Countries, they that engage in dangerous Enterprizes have nothing to lose; but here those that engage in such Designs are the People that have the greatest Estates, that can't live without them, and that would soon hang themselves should they lose them any other way than by a Plot. One may venture to say, that a Nation ought to have some Portion of this savage and fierce Temper to preserve them from Slavery, as an honest Man ought to be something of a *Misanthrope*. In all other Countries, when a Man is disgraced
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at Court, he is so with all others; his Friends abandon him, and is unhappy in every respect. Here 'tis quite otherwise: A Man is complimented on leaving the Court as one recovered from Sicknefs, and may expect to have more Friends than before. Reason alone cannot have so much Influence upon Men, there must be something of this Temper to support it. 'Tis this chiefly that renders the *English* so unfit for Court: As they have in all Times been fond of Liberty, they can't bear Constraint. They are not given to talking, but when they speak, 'tis not so much to flatter a great Man as to tell the Truth. Sometimes they happen to do it bluntly, and on Occasions where it ought to be done; and their Liberty, or Courage, in this Respect, is one of those Things that gain them Honour, and should induce others to imitate them; but since few can do that with a good Grace, it were at least to be wish'd, that some of these *English* were dispers'd through the World, to tell Men such Truths as none else dare venture to do. And next to that kind of Courage which is necessary for great Designs, this may claim the first Rank. The *English* have but little dependance on the Court, or even on the Publick in their way of living, nor will they be Slaves to Custom. They indulge their Inclinations, and please themselves with wishing for things that are extraordinary. They have Courage enough to thwart common Opinion, and the Crowd, and even pass for Fools, when 'tis necessary, which is a great Step to become truly reasonable; while we see extravagant Follies, in the mean time, become general
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concerning the English, &c. 49

and hereditary, among Nations more civiliz'd and uniform, through the care People take to resemble one another, and their Apprehension of deviating in the least from their Neighbours. Adieu,

Sir,

I am heartily yours.



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LETTER



LETTER IV.



I Have spoke to you of the *English* as a People that, for the most part, have a greater Share of good Sense, than is generally observ'd among other Nations. You desire to know the Reason of such a Superiority, and how I dare still find Fault with them after acknowledging it. I must endeavour to gratify you on that Head, tho' I should be accused of saying more than is proper in a Relation of Travels, or for one in my Condition.

Good Sense is given to all Nations; 'tis the Effence of Man; but all Men don't maintain or cultivate it with equal Care; which, in one Sense, is the Thing that distinguishes Nations. Different Governments, Wants, and Advantages, have induced them to substitute different Things in the room of good Sense. In *France*, where every one endeavours to please, and the Government is such, that few can bear up without courting the Grandees, in lieu of good Sense they have a kind of Behaviour and an ill turn of Conversation they call Wit; which are very opposite to it, since they consist, for the most part, in the Knack of setting off Trifles to advantage, which good Sense despises; so that a Man would be tempted to say, there's less of it in *France*, generally speaking, than any where else. The *Dutch*, that inhabit a barren Country, where People
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are obliged to live by Industry, and the Government is an Enemy to Grandeur and Pageantry, have introduced Commerce and Frugality, which, no doubt, make the Understanding heavy; but in the main are no way opposite to right Reason, and it must be acknowledged that there's as much of it in *Holland* as any where else. The *Italians* that live in a delightful Country, have for their Share made choice of Pleasure, and the Art of indulging Sense; wherein they have so well succeeded, that they are wholly given up to it, which is as much as to say, that, generally speaking, there's not much Reason to be expected among them. The *Germans*, who have been famous in all Times for Accomplishments of Body, turn their Thoughts chiefly that way, by applying themselves to Exercises and Dressing, and think the Improvement of the Mind consists in studying the Languages and Sciences, such as are taught in the Schools; by which their Reason is too much confin'd and prevented from exerting its Faculties. These, or any other Things once introduc'd in a Nation, and become, as it were, sacred thro' Custom, possess, fill, and fire the Mind, supplant Reason, and exclude it. Let us now see whether the good Sense of the *English* is embarrass'd with such Obstacles or not.

Their Government is mild; they enjoy Liberty, which elevates the Mind, and are not necessitated through any urgent or particular Consideration, to submit to mean or low Concessions that corrupt it. They live at their ease, and the Country and the Sea furnish them with every thing they want in abundance; so that they have no Occasion for over much OEconomy,

or to make it their chief Care. Tho' the Country abounds with things necessary for Life, it does not, however, produce such delicious things as may give the People an Occasion of refining much upon Pleasure, and giving themselves wholly up to it. They have no great Opinion of Finery or Dressing, which they leave to the Women, or of the Exercises, or generally of any thing that serves only to set off the Body; whether 'tis because they are not over handsome, or that they shun whatever requires much Care, or puts them under any Constraint. They have too good an Opinion of themselves, to imitate other People; and, in a word, they are such great Enemies to every kind of Slavery, (which is of more Consequence than all the rest) that they depend but very little upon Custom. You must conclude from all this, that there ought to be fewer conceited Opinions in *England* than elsewhere, and consequently more good Sense. But since every Nation has some certain Portion, or Measure of Folly, which they can't get rid of, it comes to pass that in a Country free from Custom or general Folly, there's at the same time a great number of particular Errors, which must vary the Description of the Manners of the People, and give frequent Occasions for Censure. The same thing happens here; but I have one thing to add, 'tis this, that whatever I may say, is only intended to regard Nations in general, and that far from denying Reason is to be found among them, I am persuaded there's none without a greater number of Men of Merit, that appears to the World. Let us now return to the *English*, and the Proofs they give of their good Sense.

I believe I have told you that some of them shun publick Employments, to which they prefer the Repose and Pleasures of a retired Life. This Singularity seems to me to be of Importance, and is a Proof of their good Sense, among many others, and I dwell upon it the more willingly in regard 'tis not only uncommon, but it may likewise be a necessary Instruction to us. Here are great numbers of those People that decline publick Business, and tho' they don't do much good to their Party by such a Conduct, they do them, however, a great deal of Honour; if it be true that there's more Merit in living without Business, than in being concerned in it; but they may even do them some good, and perhaps all that is possible. A few Men of Merit are not sufficient to change the Course of Affairs; by Men of Merit, I mean those that understand the whole Extent of their Duty, and perform it with Exactness. They see the Impossibility of redressing things, and that it might not be said, they labour in vain, they choose to live as private People, or if they happen to be in Employment, and see their Endeavours turn to no Account, they retire from publick Business, to avoid being idle Spectators of their Country's Ruin, at a Juncture when the Redress is expected at their Hands. And since by this Method they are not capable of doing any Service to their Party, what can they do better, than to choose for their Lot, the Employment of doing good in some Village? A Man serves his Country by giving extensive Marks of Probity and Tranquillity of Mind; but the greatest good he can do is to give the Publick an Example of Disinterestedness, as being, perhaps, the thing most wanted,

especially in a Country where People are so accustom'd to Employments, that they think themselves unhappy and dishonour'd without them; tho' this pretended Necessity of coming to Preferment is the Source of Corruption and Misery; nothing but Examples of a Conduct opposite to this, can undeceive People of an Error so establish'd and general, and let them see, that 'tis in every one's Power to continue in the State he is in, and consequently that a Man is under no Necessity of being corrupted to come at publick Employments, nor excusable for neglecting any thing that ought to be done by those that enjoy them. But since Example is to little Purpose, when those that support the Character of a private Man with Dignity, are not yet able to encourage any one to follow them, the best thing perhaps that a Man can do in these *melancholy Times*, is to think of nothing but himself: A Man of Integrity and Steadiness meets with Crosses on all sides in the Affairs of Life, and with Difficulties not to be overcome, and sooner or later Occasions happen, when a Retreat is the only Course that remains; things of this kind fall out here commonly. I must let you know the Resolution of an *Englishman* in an Affair of this Nature, and how far he has Courage to follow his Reason.

The King used all his Endeavours to hinder the Triennial Bill from passing, and got as many as he could on his side. The Queen took much pains the same way. Among others she spoke to my Lord *Bellemont*, who was her Treasurer, and got others to speak to him to oppose the Bill. But my Lord looking on a Triennial Parliament, as a thing necessary to the Welfare of the Kingdom, had the Courage to re-
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fuse the Queen ; upon which she told him, that since he would not be of her Party, he ought not at least to join her Enemies, and desir'd that he would not go to the House that Day: This was a way of Compromise which few Princes propose, and which I believe no Courtier ever refused before ; but among the *English* the honest Man prevails over the Courtier. He would not comply with this neither, but goes to the House, speaks for the Bill, and contributed not a little to get it pass'd. Here is a greater Instance of Virtue than is usual at Courts ; the Queen was in a great Rage, and thinking herself rather affronted by him as one of her Servants, than thwarted as a Member of Parliament, lost no time in making him repent it. She sent to tell him that she did not pretend to make a Man rich by her Favours, that declares himself against the King's Interest, and so took away his Employment. Upon this he took a Resolution agreeable for a Man of Sense and Courage : He retrenches his Equipage, and laid aside every thing he could be without ; his Son, for whom he kept a Governour, is sent to the University ; and my Lord, who was always used to a Coach, goes a Foot. In a word, without either Concern or Complaints, he leads a Life from that time conformable to the small Income that remain'd. There happen'd on this occasion an Affair much to the Honour of the *English*, and is a Proof of their Independancy on the Court, as well as of their Regard for a good Action. A great number of those that were obliged by their Employments to be of Prince George's Party, and consequently to be cautious, went immediately to visit Lord Bellemont, they complimented him on what had

pass'd, and offer'd him their Purfes: Their Applauses made much more Noife than the Mortification which the Queen intended for him. There's ftill one Circumftance wanting to fet off this *Engliſhman's* Greatnefs of Soul in its higheft Luſtre, and to ſave the Queen's Goodnefs: This is it exactly. The Queen, (whoſe Behaviour in this Affair was no more than the Reſult of her firſt Heat) thinking that ſhe had done enough to mortify a Man of Merit, and, no doubt, repenting of it, offer'd him a Penſion, that he might live at leaſt like a Man of Quality; but he ſupports the ſame Character to the End, and ſo refus'd the Penſion, telling the Queen, that ſince he was not to ſerve her any more, he ought not to accept of any Reward. If true Greatnefs (as there's no room to doubt it) conſiſts in being wiſe and ſteady, my Lord *Belle-mont* is truly Great. 'Tis in this Country, that theſe great Men are to be found, which is, in my Opinion, the moſt curious Thing in *England*, and what beſt deſerves the Attention of Travelers. It were to be wiſhed, that they would turn it a little more that way, and acquaint us with all the particulars that come to their Knowledge on Subjects of this kind: Theſe familiar Examples would be very uſeful, and more, perhaps, than all thoſe glittering Actions which Hiſtory is ſtor'd with, and which are often vicious, and unworthy of our Imitation; by this Method we ſhould at laſt be enabled to comprehend that all that is told us of Virtue is not mere Chimera, that 'tis not impoſſible to renounce Ambition and Avarice, and that that is the ſhorteſt and eaſieſt way to Happineſs. But in *England* there are Ceremonies, Buildings, and old ruin'd Houſes with Inſcriptions; ſo that there's but little Appearance

pearance that Travellers will give us a Description of *Englishmen*, or if ever they do, it will, no doubt, be of another Sort of Heroes than those I have been speaking of.

When People shew as much good Sense in their Actions, as those of this Country, 'tis easy to usher it into Conversation: Accordingly we find a great deal of it in theirs. They handle a Trifle without dwelling upon it, or putting themselves into a Passion. Good Sense is what they esteem most, and seldom talk of a Man for having Wit, or being without it. They speak of Things as they apprehend them, without any Fear of clashing with conceited Opinions, tho' common, which, for that Reason, must be of less weight among them than others; so that their Conversation is always agreeable by new Thoughts, and often judicious when they consider Things on the right Side. We find they have just Ideas of many Things, wherein other Nations are mistaken. You would be much pleas'd to hear them make frequent use of the Word *Plain* as something Praise-worthy, and that of *Cunning* as a Thing that is base. They never take the Title of a simple or innocent Man in an ill Sense, whatever Tone they pronounce it with; 'tis so far from it, that they can't praise their Nation more than in saying, they are a good-natur'd People, and pretend that there's neither the Name nor the Thing in other Countries. Another Proof of their good Sense in Conversation is, the Silence with which they intermix it; and I believe it would not be difficult to justify even their *How d'ye do*, which they repeat at Times, and which the *French* laugh at, and attribute to the Want of Wit to support Conversation. The *English* have very well observ'd, that when People

ple talk only for talking sake, there must be a great many idle things said, and that Conversation should be a Commerce of Sentiments, and not of Words; and since, for that Reason, there may not be always Matter enough for Discourse, they keep Silence for a long time; and then they have a Custom of breaking it off with a *How d'ye do?* which they make use of at Times, and is a Piece of Civility, signifying, that they are attentive on those they are in Company with, tho' they have nothing to speak to them about. But the tiresome frothy Discourse of the greatest Part of those that laugh at them, who would pass for the Witty and Agreeable in Company, justifies the silent Temper of the *English* much better than all that can be said for it.

Their Writings are better known than their Conversation, and are celebrated for their good Sense, which is often found even in their Dedications; for I must tell you, by the by, that the *English* dedicate Books as well as other People; but they know how to do it without praising, and to praise without cringing. There's a great deal of good Reasoning, but few Citations in their Works; and is as much as to say, that they despise Authorities, and that among their several Kinds of Liberty, they value that of Reason at a high rate, and are pleas'd to have it valued. As for Thefts, I am assur'd they have fewer of them than others, if you except the Stage, that is to say, the *Bagatelle*. Every where else they despise this Kind of Robbing, and 'tis more likely that they are the People that are robb'd; the same good Sense by which they excel others in the Sciences, demonstrates to them likewise their Uncertainty and Vanity, of which, perhaps, they are more sensible than others, and have,
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at the same time, the most Courage and Honesty to acknowledge it.

'Tis Matter of Concern to a Man to see People with so many good Qualities, so little communicative and so harsh to Strangers that court them. As this is one of the great Faults they are reproach'd with, it ought to be examin'd a little. All that can be said against them on this Account may be reduced to this; that they don't compliment us much, or that they are slow in doing it: As for insulting us, I believe none charges them with it, except it may be some of the Story-Mongers that have never seen the Country they give a Description of, or that exasperate every thing in order to make themselves appear more considerable. I say then, that the *English* do no more in this respect, than what we see reasonable People do every Day: They are generally reserv'd at first, and open their Minds in Proportion to their Knowledge of the People they deal with. On the other Hand, we reap the same Advantage by them, which is common among reserv'd People, and sufficiently recompences those that covet their Company, viz. that we may depend more on their Friendship, once gain'd, than upon that of your easy, fawning People, that condescend immediately to every thing, and even obviate those that don't desire their Company. It must likewise be observ'd, that 'tis the *French* that complain most of this Behaviour, without considering this is a Country, where the People are cool, and reserv'd, and consequently ought not to mind such forward and officious Pretences of Friendship, with which they are not acquainted. When *England* is censur'd on this Account, 'tis always by People that judge of it with Regard to *France*,
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and that come from thence for the most part. But I think they don't exclaim so much, when they come into this Country by the Way of *Holland*. In a Word, if People pretend that the *English* have still something worse than this Coolness, or Indifferency, that is, their Contempt of Strangers, it ought to be considered, that most of them stay in the Country to make their Fortunes, and court the *English* for that Reason. And therefore, should they think meanly of us, or despise us, I don't see they are much in the wrong; for they themselves are content with what they have, and never travel but for Pleasure, as People ought to do that have already made their Fortunes. And in my Judgment, the Fault we have most Reason to reproach the *English* with, is their extravagant Opinion of their Nation and Country: 'Tis certain they can't hear either found Fault with on any Account; in this Respect they are far less reasonable than the *French*, of whom a great many well-bred People, not only acknowledge what is blameable in the Nation, but even prove it by the Writings which they publish to correct it. This Self-Love of the *English* is, of all things, the most troublesome to Strangers, who desire to be acquainted with them: It hinders People from conversing freely on all Subjects, and informing them of the Manners, and Character of the Nation. I am,

Sir,

heartily yours.

LETTER



LETTER V.



OW that I am about writing to you concerning the Laws and Policy of the *English*, don't expect an exact Enquiry, which is difficult in Things of that Nature; I can only inform you of some singular and uncommon Passages, that have surpriz'd me, and which, in my Opinion, well deserve your Attention. Nor would I have you think that there's nothing commendable in either, because my Remarks tend to their Disadvantage. Both are, no doubt, good in some Respects, as well as in other Countries; but 'tis only the ill Part in all Governments that is taken Notice of, because we suffer by it: The Good, which only prevents our Suffering, is not so easily observ'd.

The *English* Government is excellent in many Things, and in nothing more than in supporting Liberty; which is, at the same Time, permitted to degenerate on several Occasions into Licentiousness, and that to such a height, that I don't know whether it be for the Advantage of the *English* to maintain it. The People, that Prosperity has render'd forward enough to attempt any thing, have been permitted, from Time to Time, to slip into exorbitant Privileges, which they now look upon as their own: For tho' the Laws in Being are not sufficient to keep them within Bounds, yet should any Alterations happen

happen to be made, to make them more effectual, the People would immediately regard them as so many Attacks on their Privileges. Let us now see what they are, and how much every thing seems to favour them. One of the Ways tending to that End is, never to aid the Law, but to keep strictly to the Letter, which is done sometimes after a childish Manner: For Example, 'Tis against Law to have two Wives; but to avoid it, a Man has no more to do, than to marry three. Not long since the Thing was prov'd, or at least thought to be so by most People, and I believe they would have still continued in the same Opinion, had not a rash unthinking Fellow spoil'd all by carrying things too far. As he travelled thro' the Countries, he marry'd all the pretty Girls that came in his way. But the *Lawyers* have since bethought themselves, that a Man cannot marry three, without first marrying two, and so the *English* have lost their Privilege. I am assur'd that a Man can't be arrested, if he finds any room for chicaning about the Spelling of his Name; he has no more to do, than to tell the Catch-poles that the Writ is not against him, and they must acquiesce. Every one, as you may well imagine, is ready enough to take Advantage of these Quibbles, to play with the Laws, and so get rid of the Danger.

In case of a Crime not punishable by any known or positive Laws, the Judges choose rather to acquit the Criminal, than to have Recourse to general Laws that might be rigorous. Suppose a Man would be reveng'd on another, or insult him, he need only take Care that the Crime be not specified in the Defence or Answer, and then he is safe. Some Years past, a Man happen'd to
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cut off his Adversary's Nose; but it had no other Consequence, than making a Law against the Offence. 'Tis true, there was one in Force at that Time against Maiming; but the Man alledg'd in his Justification, that a Person without a Nose was not maim'd, but disfigured; and so escap'd by that Distinction. This gave Occasion to make an express Law against Disfiguring, which comprehends all Parts of the Body, and puts them out of Danger. What a Jest is this in so serious an Affair, and among such grave People!

But let us examine a little what ill People have to fear, or the Good to hope for from the Laws. Let us begin with the Thieves, who are so considerable a Body, that the Government ought, in good Earnest, to think of some Expedient to destroy them. But this is not thought of: 'Tis so far from it, that they are treated in such a Manner, as to make them somewhat easy, and not to repent altogether of choosing such a kind of Life. Here I'll acquaint you with the Things that seem to be done on purpose to encourage them. If one gets into a House, or other Building, without breaking open or forcing any thing, he is acquitted for a small Fine, or some other trifling Punishment, let the Theft be never so considerable. If he goes to work awkwardly, and has the Misfortune to be taken, and condemn'd, People do all they can to comfort him, and make his Condition easy: He keeps all the Money he stole, and if you ask the Reason of such an extraordinary Custom, they tell you, the unhappy Creature's Life pays for all, and that People's Money can't be distinguished, so as to be able to return every Man his own. At this rate they have Money enough to soften
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the Thoughts of Death; they eat, drink, and divert themselves sometimes in getting a Year's time for the Women under Condemnation, that happen to be lock'd up with them. Here, as well as in other Countries, they don't execute Women with Child, or such as give themselves out to be in that Condition, as all may easily be in this Place; for there's nothing to hinder the Sparks that keep them Company from being in a good Humour, and doing them Service; or in case these Gentlemen shou'd happen to fail, the Jaylor or his People are gallant enough to prolong their Days. There's generally all sorts of Debauchery and Wickedness in the Prisons, and every thing looks among those that are condemn'd, as if there was nothing more to fear, or that an approaching and inevitable Death was a Motive to Pleasure and Corruption. Thus an *Englishman* will say, Liberty follows us every where, and we find a way to enjoy it even to the End of our Lives.

The Women of Pleasure are treated with as much Gentleness as the Thieves, there's a prodigious number of them, they follow their Trades openly, and spoil two thirds of the young Men with Impurity. If one of them finds herself impregnated, she may pitch on who she will for a Father, and make him a Present of a Child. If they are ask'd any Questions about the Matter in their Lying-in, 'tis after such a Manner, that any one might be persuaded there was no harm in it, or that there could be a Juncture when a Lie should be troublesome to a Crack. The Men are oftentimes surprized to find themselves Fathers all of a sudden, and to have Children they did not think of. I know

know a *French* Gentleman that was not a little perplex'd about one of these *Presents*: The Girl that carry'd it to him was very ugly; he was very vain, and would much rather be suspected of any thing else, than an Intrigue with such a homely Piece. He would by no Means accept of the Baby, and so gave Security, according to Custom, to prevent going to Prison, and in the mean time took a great deal of Pains to justify himself. There was one merry Circumstance in the Affair, if the People of the Country may be believed, the Gentleman, it seems, carry'd *Testimonies* enough about him to prove his Innocence in a Minute, and so as never to be under the like Apprehensions for the Time to come; an *Englishman*, no doubt, would sooner die than get off in such a Manner. But the Girl's Death, which happen'd in the mean time, put an End to his Fears; she own'd, as she was dying, that what she did was only for Intrigue sake, and to see how he would get rid of it.

The marry'd Women of Gallantry have as little Reason to complain of the Laws, as the Ladies I have been talking of: There's one as much to their Advantage as they can wish, which decides a grand Point in their Favour; a Husband is obliged to father all the Children his Wife is deliver'd of, while he is in the Kingdom, tho' he can prove that he had not seen her for Years. The Women have many other considerable Privileges tending the same Way; they can't be found guilty of the Business without the clearest Proofs, and pretty near such as *Madam Pernelle* insists upon in *Moliere*, which is impossible for the Husbands to produce, they must be constantly posted behind

hind their Wives, and *see all with their own Eyes*, for no other Proof will do. The first Duke of *England* prov'd his Misfortune clear enough, at least so as to satisfy the Publick, but yet he could not get a Divorce from his Wife. All the Satisfaction he had, was to make the Gallant (who was a rich Tavern Man's Son) pay a considerable Sum of Money in an Action of *Scandalum Magnatum*, which punishes any Disrespect to the Noblemen. So that in this Country 'tis as great a Fault, and there's just as much Danger in debauching a Lord's Wife, as to speak ill of him.

'Tis true, indeed, that this Toleration does not shelter the Women from all Dangers; for there are some Husbands that have Recourse to other Expedients, when the Laws won't help them: I'll inform you of what an *Englishman* told me on the Subject. A certain Woman finding her End draw near, bethought herself of asking her Husband's Pardon for a great Injury she had done him, and with which she would acquaint him, in case he promis'd to forgive her. He readily comply'd, and then she own'd an Affair of Gallantry; the Husband assur'd her that he would not resent it, adding withal, that he had done her some Wrong, for which he ask'd Pardon, this she did willingly, being no less surprized, than transported with her Husband's extraordinary Goodness. Upon this he own'd to her that he was well appriz'd of her Conduct, which had made him poison her. Here's an Instance of the cool Blood, and Constancy of an *Englishman* that has taken a Resolution. It is well that People who are so steady don't do it often in all Things, especially in a Country where the Laws are so easy. But to put
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an End to the Proofs I have given of their extraordinary Gentleness, let us go on to the false Witnesses.

If these Wretches are not entirely above the Fear of Punishment, it may be said at least, that 'tis so light, and that there's so little Proportion between the Risque they run, if they are found guilty, and their Prospect of Gain in case of Success, that a Man ought not to be surprized at their Numbers. In the Year 1692 a Fellow forged a Writing, and counterfeited the Hands of seven of the chief Lords of the Kingdom, who engag'd themselves by it, to favour King *James's* intended Invasion, and to seize the Queen. He found a way of conveying the Paper secretly into the Bishop of *Rochester's* House, who was one of the seven. He inform'd against the Bishop, upon which he was taken up, and all his Papers seiz'd, except this that was forg'd, which as Fortune would have it, the Messengers could not find, and this was the only Thing that sav'd the Lords. Tho' I should say no more of this villainous Attempt which is scarce credible, I am persuaded you have heard enough to astonish you, especially when you consider that it was undertaken with no other View than to get Money. But the Story does not end here, there's a great deal remaining untold, which is more incredible than what you have heard. The Roguery is all found out; and the Rogue, who was worth nothing, and consequently without Friends, is left to the Severity of the Laws, but meets with no other Punishment than the Pillory, that is, to be expos'd for some Hours to the People's Laughter, and the Dirt which is thrown at him. Had he succeeded in this, or any other Design of

the same Kind, he might well hope for a very great Reward; if he miscarries there's nothing more than the Pillory; when a Man once loses his good Name by Things of this Nature, and such a Punishment, he goes to work again without any Hesitation, and may undertake any Wickedness. How childish is all this! will you say, or rather, what little Care do they take in *England* to secure People's Honour and Lives! or have the *English* no more good Sense than what every one makes use of for himself, or his own private Affairs?

If, on one hand, the Government is negligent in finding out proper Ways to keep wicked People within Bounds, it takes but little Care, on the other, to relieve the unfortunate; and it may be affirm'd that the first don't suffer so much by the utmost Severity of the Laws, as the other by their neglect; if it be true that hanging is a less Punishment than starving with Hunger, which is often the hard Fate of some Prisoners for Debt: They must maintain themselves, for the Creditors are not obliged to contribute any thing towards it, and the King allows them (as they call it) nothing but Drink, that is to say, Water. People are often arrested for Trifles, a few Shillings, perhaps, which are much more difficult to be got in a Prison than out of it, and after some Time, they have not Money enough for Subsistence, much less to pay Debts with. Some have been reduced to live on the Rats and Mice they have caught; others ill used by the Jailors in many Respects, and afterwards poison'd. These Wretches have publish'd a whole Volume of their Sufferings, and were in such Haste to apprise the World of them, that they wish'd the whole

whole Book might be contain'd in the Title, which is too long to be quoted at large; but here you have the Beginning and End of it: "The Cries of the Oppress'd: Or a True and Melancholy Account of the unparalell'd Sufferings of the poor Prisoners for Debt in most of the Prisons in *England*——with other barbarous Cruelties not to be found in any History or Nation whatever. The whole made out from the clearest Proofs." The Book was printed in 1691, and address'd to the Parliament; but I have not heard that it has yet produced any Effect.

'Tis difficult to proceed any further without exclaiming against such Cruelty as this, which is not only uncommon, but astonishing. The Policy of the *English*, in not remedying every Kind of Inconveniency, as much as they might, is not unlike that of other Nations; for to keep Men in Order, and make them live neighbourly together, must be a difficult and imperfect Work in all Countries; but to see Thousands suffer miserably in the common Prisons, and many die for Hunger, and the Government not vouchsafe to apply any Remedy, is what could not be well expected among these good Natur'd and wealthy People, (many of whom are often choak'd with their own Fat) and in a Country where the Prince's Care is so extensive and condescending, as to order the very Ducks and Fish in Ponds to be well supply'd, and that by printed Declarations posted up in several Places. But the great Cruelty of the *English* consists rather in tolerating the Evil than in doing it. 'Tis certain they abhor all cruel Things; Duels, Assassinations, and generally all Sorts of Violence

are very uncommon in this Country, and I don't remember to have heard any thing of poysoning, except the two Instances I have mention'd; for generally speaking, an *Englishman* vents his Rage upon himself.

Their abolishing of Tortures (which are a Shame to Christianity) is no small Proof of their Aversion to Cruelty. They are look'd upon here with Horror, and never put in Practice even to discover the Accomplices in a Plot; while other Nations that regard the *English* as Savages, and value themselves very much for extraordinary Politeness, still retain this barbarous Custom, and carry it so far, that the most frightful Tortures are in the Rank of common Formalities in criminal Proceedings. I'll acquaint you here, in a few Words, with the Method which the *English* observe in Things of this Nature; it seems to me to be singular, and I think it preferable to any thing of the Kind in other Countries.

No Man is punish'd with Death without being found guilty by two Courts of Justice; the first consists of above twelve (e) Judges, but twelve at least must agree in Opinion, the other consists of that Number, and no more, they must all live in the Neighbourhood of the Party accused, and be of the same Rank, as near as possible; after they are sworn, they continue together, without eating or drinking, till they are agreed in their Verdict: If you observe well, you'll find that all the Circumstances in the whole Proceeding are to the Purpose, and well grounded: 'Tis to them we are indebted for an extraordinary Affair that hap-
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(e) The Author means the Grand and Petty Juries.

pen'd some Years ago: A Man was accused of Murder, and the Evidence was so clear, that eleven of the Jury were for finding him guilty without any Hesitation; the twelfth would not agree, but continued obstinate in spite of all the Arguments offer'd by the Judge to convince him: At last, the other Jury-men, being press'd by Hunger, came over to his Opinion, and so the Prisoner was acquitted. The Judge, being surpriz'd at the Man's Proceeding, ask'd him the Reason of it in private; he comply'd with the Request, having first bound the Judge to Secresy. The Man that acted this extraordinary Part proved to be the Murderer, but he would neither violate his Oath, nor consent to a second Murder. When one considers the Conciseness and Brevity of this Method, and reflects at the same Time on the abominable Tedioufness in Civil Causes, which are spun out to as great a Length in this Country, as any other, 'tis difficult to comprehend how Years should not be sufficient to put an End to one trifling Suit, among People that require no more than a Morning to determine between Life and Death; and that the same People who are so fond of Liberty in other Things, can submit tamely to the shameful Tyranny of Law-Tricks, and of those whose Profession 'tis to improve them.

'Tis surprizing to see People sometimes condemn'd for small Matters, and others easily acquitted at the same time that seem to be much more guilty; the Reason is, because they don't determine any thing but on the clearest Proofs, without any Regard to Probability. Here Malefactors may sometimes escape the Punishments they deserve; but 'tis rare to see an innocent

Man suffer: Tho' these Criminal Proceedings are very moving, yet we see them often attended with such gay and airy Circumstances, (no way agreeable to so melancholy a Subject) that the printed Accounts of them are in the Opinion of many People one of the most diverting Things a Man can read in *London*. Among other Particulars, there's an Account of the Preparations made by some of the Malefactors for Death; and always that others would not listen to the Ordinary's Admonitions, or that they were insensible, and resolv'd to prepare themselves for Death after their own Manner, which is a Thing no way surprizing to the People here, nor perhaps to you neither, after all I have told you already in their Character: The *Ordinary* endeavours, on his Part, to persuade the Reader, that the Unhappiness of the Criminals must be imputed to their neglect of the Sabbath, which is look'd upon here not only as the height of Impiety, but likewise the Way to it. So that in this Country, as well as in others, the People always make choice of some easy Duty of Religion, and apply themselves to it zealously, as if it were something more essential than ordinary, and so it may be truly said, that among the Preachers the People make the greatest Number.

These Executions, with the Farces that attend them, have made me think, with Astonishment, of the Obstinacy of the *English*, for not making some Change in their Laws. For it appears very plain, that these People that have so little Fear of Death, are sensibly touch'd with the Apprehensions of any other Kind of Punishment; and there's no room to doubt, but one Example of condemning a Thief to any hard Labour

Labour that was to continue for a considerable Time, would have more Influence than all these frequent Executions, which are scarcely look'd upon to be infamous, and consequently can never produce any great Effect. Something happen'd not long since, as it were on Purpose to convince them of this Truth; a Thief was found guilty of stealing some small Matter, and sent to the Work-house. He was no sooner come out of it, but he return'd to the old Trade, and is taken again. They design'd to send him once more to Work, but he would not bear to think of it, and choosing rather to die, he own'd that he had stole a Silver Bason from a Goldsmith, which he proved, and so got himself fairly hang'd for it. This Contempt of Death, and Fear of Labour point out very clearly the way to free the Country of Thieves; and there are a great many Reasons to prefer this Kind of Punishment to the other, since all reasonable People agree, that there's no Proportion between the Crime and the Punishment, between Thieving and Death. 'Tis true other Nations agree with the *English* in this respect, but these shew an unaccountable Indolence (not to be met with any where else in my Opinion) in their neglect of such Expedients, as would soon put an End to the Practice. You wou'd, perhaps, think that they look upon these Executions as so many publick Shews due to the People, and that a Stock of Thieves must be kept up and improv'd for that End.

There are many other Reasons to prove that the Laws of this Country are far from being rigorous; but if any of them happen to be more severe than ordinary, they are but faintly executed. I believe there has been enough said
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to satisfy you, that a Man ought not to be surprized to hear the People value their Laws very much, and think them the best in the World. 'Tis much more surprizing, that People of such good Sense, should not make use of it on these, as well as on other Occasions, by accommodating their Laws and Customs to their Necessities: But I believe it will be easy to find the Reason partly in the Form of their Government: It seems the great Business of Parliament is to watch the King, and his to watch the Parliament; so that the People, which both of them endeavour to manage, enjoy, in the mean time, all the Licentiousness they can wish for. Besides, 'tis certain, that such free and wealthy People as the *English*, can't be so easily brought to follow any Party, as others; being too much accusom'd to gratify their own Humour in obeying. I could readily add a third Reason, that the same sound Understanding which renders a Man truly great, unhappily inclines him rather to shun publick Affairs than to redress them.

I embrace you, SIR, &c.



LETTER



LETTER VI.



H A T you desir'd of me, Sir, in your last, puts me in Mind of an Affair that happen'd here not long since. A Musician sat down to sing to some of his Friends. After he had entertain'd them with some of his best Airs, one of the Company desir'd him to sing a Ballad then in Vogue. The Musician being provok'd at such Usage, gave him a terrible look, and went away, without singing any more. I will not take upon me to maintain that the Letters I write to you were fine Airs; but 'tis certain that the Description of *London*, which you desire, is no more than a kind of a Ballad, in Comparison of the People that live in it, and that you must think me very good, if I continue singing after such an Affront. I don't, however, approve of the Musician's ill Humour: And since you are for Ballads, I am resolv'd you shall have them.

London is situated in a Plain along the *Thames*, which is here in the Form of a Half-moon; the Plain is somewhat shelving, so that the Situation is very agreeable. And tho' 'tis at this Time the greatest City in *Europe*, the People are still adding to it; and great Numbers coming from all Sides to settle in it, it was thought necessary to build whole Streets.

The Streets are wide and strait, especially those that have been built since the great Fire, which

which are about half the City. They want nothing but to be better paved. 'Tis surprizing, that in such a wealthy City (where People never retrench any thing for being superfluous) they should neglect what is really necessary, and be saving in a thing that might keep them from the Dirt and the Dust.

The Houses are built with Bricks, and made very convenient, the smallest Corners are useful for something or other. The Ground is very dear, so that People make the most of it. They take it commonly for a certain time, forty or fifty Years perhaps, and calculate Things with so much Exactness, that the Buildings seldom stand much longer. But they are sometimes out in their Computations; and 'tis common to see some of these daring Accomptants crush'd to pieces by Houses that drop before the End of the Term. Their way of Building is both agreeable and expeditious. A Man in this Place has the Pleasure of seeing his House built in less time, than is allow'd in other Countries for laying the Foundation. Let us now go on to the chief Places of this great City. I am sensible I promise too much, and that Prints would be more proper than a Letter; but 'tis that you desire, and not Prints, and my Design is to please you.

Whitehall is situated between the *Thames* and the Park, and is a great old House, very ugly, but very convenient. It has nothing like a Palace but the *Banqueting-house*; the rest is a heap of ill built Houses, which were not intended to join. This is the ordinary Residence of the Kings of *England*. But the present King lives at *Kensington*, in a small House which he bought of a private Person, the Smoak and thick
Air

Air of *London* not agreeing with his Constitution. 'Tis about a Mile and an half from it, and has nothing extraordinary either for Building or Gardening.

St. *James's* is another Royal Palace; 'tis old, and very irregular, but convenient and large. There's nothing else to make it agreeable, but the Prospect of the Park, which is near it. Let us get into it, to refresh ourselves a little after the Fatigue of describing the three Royal Palaces.

The Park is a large Extent of Ground with Walks set with Trees all round, which are very agreeable. There's a Canal in the middle edg'd with Trees, where one may see the Ducks swimming; the rest is Meadow, and Pasture for Deer and Cows. Its great Beauty consists in bringing (as it were) the Country into the City. I am inform'd, King *Charles II.* intended to have added more Ornaments to it, and that he had sent for a skillful Person from *Paris* for that Purpose, the same that design'd the Scheme for adorning the *Tuilleries*. After he had taken a narrow View of the Place, he found that its native Beauty, Country Air, and Deferts, had something greater in them, than any thing he could contrive, and perswaded the King to let it alone. So the Park remains in the same State, that is, a fine Country-like Place, and is the more agreeable, in my Opinion, because it has neither Art nor Regularity. This is the Place where People go to get rid of the Dirt, Confusion, and Noise of this great City, and where the Ladies in fine Weather display all their Ornaments. They make a fine Appearance, as I have told you before, and their Splendour is the more surprizing, because we imagine 'tis in the Country we see them.

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There's another Royal Palace to be described, which is called *Somerset-house*. 'Tis no small Concern to me that I cannot gratify you in this, and to find myself obliged to send you an imperfect Account of *London* for Want of so important an Article. The Truth on't is, I did not foresee that any one would set me to this Task, and besides, not being over curious to see Buildings, I unhappily neglected this. But, if you please, I'll say something of the *Tbames*, which runs just by it.

Next to the Park, I see nothing more agreeable or commodious than the River. I say nothing of its Breadth or Depth, which, with the Advantage of the Tides, render it capable of receiving the largest Ships of War, and 'tis to this that the Wealth and Greatness of the City is owing. What pleases me besides is, the Gentleness of its Stream, and a thousand little Boats that cover it, and pass from one End of the City to the other when People have Business, or for Pleasure when they have none. On these Occasions there are sometimes great Numbers of Hautboys and Violins, which render the Amusements on the Water extremely delightful.

There's a private House more stately than all I have mention'd, and is properly what Travelers call a *Thing worth seeing*; this is my Lord *Montague's*. The *English* are modest enough, when they go no further than to say, 'tis the finest House in *London*; if they don't imagine that that comprehends every thing. The House wants nothing but Furniture and People: You would think 'tis a Prince's Palace that does not live in it.

There are several Squares in *London*, some of them are very fine, and surrounded with Palli-
sadoes

fadoes and Rails, but they are generally far short of what they might be made. They are not much adorn'd, and few People stop to amuse themselves about them, which would be very proper for this great City, and would shew the Number, Wealth, and leisure Time of the Inhabitants. I believe, indeed, that the Park makes People neglect these Places, and that they are not spacious enough for those that walk fast. I am likewise of Opinion, that the great Number of Coffee-houses, where People see one another conveniently, is one Reason that these Squares are so little frequented. But whatever 'tis, be sure to remember this as a thing very remarkable, that there are a great many Places in *London* called Squares, where People may walk, and where few do.

The Tower of *London* well deserves a whole Letter; and generally speaking, it takes up a great deal of room in the Pocket-Books of the Gentlemen that travel. 'Tis the Citadel of the City; the Arsenal, the Prison for People of Quality, and the Mint. I don't remember all, and 'tis possible I may have forgot half its Titles. There they shew Crowns and Sceptres, Axes, and Clubs, Lions, Leopards, and other terrible Things. The Governor of a young Gentleman, not long since, examin'd all very carefully, and was of Opinion, that the Thing which deserv'd chiefly to be taken Notice of, was the Axe that cut off the Head of a Queen of *England*; he made the young Gentleman under his Care, take off his Glove, and hold the Axe in his Hand, that he might boast of it on Occasion.

If you have any Friend that is curious, and that intends to travel into *England*, you may give him an important Piece of Advice; that is, that

that he need not be in much haste, for *St. Paul's Church* is not yet finish'd; People are constantly at work upon it, and 'tis in a very forward Condition. 'Tis only waiting five or six Years, at most, to have the Pleasure of seeing it compleatly finish'd; 'tis one of the largest Churches in *Europe*, and is capable of putting a stop to all the Corruption of *London*, provided the Efficacy of the Sermons is answerable to the largeness of the Building.

That of *Westminster* is very curious for its Antiquity, the Tombs, and Epitaphs of the illustrious People that are interr'd in it, and also for *Henry the Seventh's Chapel*; but above all, for its being the Place appointed for the Coronation of the Kings of *England*. If a Man has not the Happiness to see this rare Ceremony, he may, however, get some intelligent Person, as he views the Church, to shew him the Manner of performing the whole, and then form an Idea of it with the Satisfaction of imagining himself to have been on the Spot.

The stately Building call'd the *Royal Exchange*, is another Ornament of the City, and might furnish Matter enough for a Description, which, no doubt, would become one of the Ornaments of my Letter, could I persuade myself to undertake it; but several Obstacles stand in the way, and especially the Apprehension I am under lest I should not perform so great a Task with the Exactness which is so necessary and agreeable in the Description of Buildings. I'll tell you no more of it than this, that the Merchants meet there every Day at a certain Hour, and that I have had sometimes the Pleasure to see from its Top, the World in Epitome, and laugh'd to see Men, for a little Gain, stir about like a Swarm
of

Ants, and hear them humming like a Swarm of Bees.

The Monument stands near the *Royal Exchange*; I must tell you what it is, for then I shall have the better Opportunity of giving you an Account of an Inscription, being an essential Thing to a Relation of Travels; it gives them an Air of Literature and Importance which they have not without it, and makes them immortal, if any Thing can. The Monument is a Column of the *Dorick* Order, chamber'd and hollow, 'tis rais'd near the Place where the Fire begun. This being the highest Building about *London*, People go to the Top for a Prospect, and 'tis the first Place visited by curious Travellers. There's a long Inscription at the Bottom, by which the Papists are charg'd in bitter Terms with being the Incendiaries. King *James* order'd it to be erased; afterwards the *English* had it cut deeper than it was. And since they are a People subject to Revolutions, 'tis not improbable but they may be obliged to make use even of the Foundation, if they are so very obstinate about their Inscription:

'Tis no small Concern to me, now I have enter'd on so curious an Affair, that I can't go any further, and entertain you with the Plan of some Building, the Description of a Tomb, Blazoning of a Coat of Arms, an Account of some Bas Reliefs, a Dissertation on some Medal, or, in a Word, that I can't restore some Inscription half worn out, which would raise me even to the Sublime. In the room of all this, Sir, I present you with an humble and sincere Acknowledgment of my Want of Capacity for Things of that Kind. I must even confess, my Negligence has been so very great, as not to see the Ceremony

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mony of giving Judgment against a Lord, which happen'd since my coming to *London*, and that I did not go to the Horse-Races, which is one of the greatest Diversions in *England*. Dare I tell it? I have even neglected to see the King in his Robes, and the famous Universities of *Oxford* and *Cambridge*. Let me tell you what I have seen.

There's a prodigious Number of Coffee-houses in *London*, the Outfides have nothing remarkable, or worth describing; so that I'll speak only of their Customs, which deserve some Notice, because most of the Men resort to them to pass away the Time. These Coffee-houses are the constant Rendezvous for Men of Business as well as the idle People, so that a Man is sooner ask'd about his Coffee-house than his Lodging. Besides Coffee, there are many other Liquors which People can't well relish at first. They smoak, game, and read the *Gazettes*, and sometimes make them too. Here they treat of Matters of State, the Interests of Princes, and the Honour of Husbands, &c. In a Word, 'tis here the *English* discourse freely of every Thing, and where they may be known in a little Time; their Character, likewise, may be partly discover'd, even by People that are Strangers to the Language. It appears coolly in their Discourses, and Attention to what they hear; you don't see them interrupt one another, nor several speaking at the same Time. They represent these Coffee-houses as the most agreeable Things in *London*, and they are, in my Opinion, very proper Places to find People that a Man has Business with, or to pass away the Time a little more agreeably, perhaps, than he can do at Home; but in other respects they are loathsome, full of Smoak like a
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Guard-Room, and as much crowded. I believe 'tis these Coffee-houses that furnish the Inhabitants of this great City with Slander, for there one hears exact Accounts of every thing done in Town, as if it were but a Village.

The Shops are handsome and large, and there's no room to fear the dangerous Civility of the People of *Paris*, that would engage a Man to buy more than he has a Mind to do; nor the cold and blunt Behaviour of the *Dutch* Merchant, that is always for saving Charges; you are neither sooth'd nor sower'd by the Merchants in *London*. They seldom ask too much: Strangers buy as cheap as others. 'Tis true, the *English* pay so roundly for every thing, that the Merchants can do no more than use us as if we were *English*; but we are oblig'd to them for not distinguishing us in the odious Manner they do on other Occasions, which is more provoking than the Loss of the Money they sharp us of.

That you may think me an exact Writer, you shall have an Article on the Taverns, and 'tis surprizing that we Travellers should say so little of them, since they are, perhaps, the Things we are best acquainted with. Every Thing is excessively dear in them, but so far all are treated alike. Fish Entertainments are much better here than in *Paris*; but there's no Comparison in other Things, especially the Attendance; and it must be owned that a Tavern is the proper Place for Haste and Forwardness. I had like to have forgot something very particular and important, the Tavern Signs are extraordinary big, and magnificent; I have seen some in Villages that were worth pretty near as much as the Taverns themselves.

There are great Numbers of Hackney Coaches in *London*, they are pretty cheap, and ready at a Moment's Warning; all the Cross-ways, and Corners of Streets are crowded with them. The Coachmen keep in their Boxes, but watch People narrowly as they pass by, and run towards a Man on the least Signal: This, in my Opinion, is one of the Advantages which *London* has of *Paris*. And without this Conveniency, People wou'd pass their Time but very indifferently in this Place, for it rains continually in Winter; and the Streets being ill pav'd, are scarce fit for walking. Sometimes a thick Fog mixed with an offensive and unwholesome Smoak, covers the Town; so that in *London* a Man is employ'd either to keep himself out of the Dirt, or shut up in a Coach, to prevent being blacken'd or poison'd with the Smoak. Besides this, the Streets are very ill serv'd with Lights in the Night-time; 'tis true, for some time they have made use of Lamps, but there's not a sufficient Number of them; and besides, they are made after such a Fashion, that a Man is rather dazzled than lighted from the only Side which casts a Light.

The Winter Dirt is follow'd by intolerable heaps of Summer Dust; it spreads every where, and sometimes makes very fine Houses unfit for Habitation. Then People retire to the Country, and you wou'd say that the *English* must have Dust to make them go. This may, perhaps, persuade you, that the Country here is not agreeable, or that the *English* have no great Inclination for it; but this is not altogether true, and before I finish my Letter, I must say something of it. And now I hope your Curiosity is entirely gratify'd, after all I have told you about the
City

City of *London*, and that you'll put it in the Number of those you know, and myself among the complaisant People, that can't refuse their Friends any thing, and that find nothing impossible, when they are resolv'd to please them.

The Country is mostly plain, but not uniform, which makes flat Countries very disagreeable. There are Hills here and there, so that you have always a Prospect. You may see Rivulets winding; and Woods of several sorts, Parks, and fine Houses. But what is more agreeable than all the rest, is the Verdure, which is more lively and durable than in other Countries, but they pay pretty dear for it, since the moist Air by which 'tis nourish'd, soon puts an End to their fine Weather, so that they have nothing but Leaves, when other People have Fruit: Theirs have but little taste, except the *Golden Pippins*, which I believe I have said something of already. Their Flowers have little smell; their Game is insipid; and I don't know that there's good Water any where; and they have no Wine, which is a greater Mortification to them than all the rest: You know there are no Vineyards in *England*, and tho' they bring Wine from other Countries, yet they have not the Pleasure of eating Grapes, which is, in my Opinion, the great Inconvenience of Countries that have no Vineyards.

The *English* value this Country I have been describing, at a very high rate; they boast of it in an extraordinary Manner, and prefer it to all the Countries in the World, as they do themselves to all other Nations. I wish it were in my Power to give you an Account of their Manner of Living; but I never durst inform myself sufficiently about it. I am told, they make one another long and frequent Visits at Hunting

Matches, and at Entertainments; the first consists in running fast, and the other in drinking hard; but I must not forget one Circumstance among the rest, that there are some Occasions, where the People that value themselves for doing every thing in order, get but half drunk with the Man of the House, that they may afterwards compleat the Work thro' the good Will of the Servants. They have some other very particular Ways which I take no Notice of here, because I know them but by Report: I was satisfy'd with this uncertain Intelligence, lest there might be some Mysteries in the way, which none can approach unpunish'd.

I am but just return'd from a short Journey I took into the Country, but I have not seen any thing worth relating, except Sir *William Temple's* Place of Retirement, and another House that is not so solitary. I happen'd by chance to be in the Neighbourhood of that famous Negociator and Philosopher, and in the Interim I recollected something I had read a few Days before in one of his Books: That *England* was exclaim'd against in the World, for no other Reason but because Strangers that come to visit her, had, generally speaking, no other knowledge of her than what they got in their Inns, and by People worth nothing; and perhaps without Merit, Birth, or Fortune to give them an Opportunity of knowing People of Figure. I thought a Man that reproach'd Strangers after such a Manner, could not excuse himself from giving a good Reception to those that went to visit him, and besides that, I had no Reason to be apprehensive of any violent or boisterous Diversions. I went accordingly, and was receiv'd with great Civility, but this, in my Opinion, is nothing to the Kingdom
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dom in general; for there are but few such as Sir *William Temple* in *England*, no more than in other Countries, and a few such able Men as he, conclude nothing for their Country; for they possess all the good Qualities of the Nations they are acquainted with. I spoke to him about his Writings; he ask'd me whether I had read them in *English* or in *French*; and on my telling him it was in *French*, he complain'd of the Translation, saying, that they *had barbarously murder'd it*. Here I saw the Model of an agreeable Place of Retirement: 'Tis far enough from the City not to fear Visits, the Air is wholesome, the Land good, the Prospect bounded, but pleasant, a River runs by the House, and makes the only Noise that is heard; the House is small, but convenient, and nicely furnish'd; the Garden proportion'd to the House and cultivated by the Owner, himself free from Business, and, in all Appearance, without Designs, few Servants, and some People of Sense to keep him Company, which is one of the most agreeable Things in the Country, to the Man that is so happy as to have it. I observ'd, at the same time, the Effect of all this; Sir *William* is healthful and brisk, and tho' he is much troubled with the Gout, and advanc'd in Years, yet he tired me with walking, and had it not been for some Rain that fell in the mean time, he would, I believe, have oblig'd me to call for Quarter. You may well imagine I did not see all this without sighing several times, and reflecting on the Reasons that carried me to this Place, to disturb People in their Retirement.

The good old Gentleman thought I was not recompenc'd enough for my Trouble, since I saw nothing but his House; and tho' I assur'd

him I was much more curious in Men than in Buildings, and that I was satisfy'd with the Honour of seeing him, he would have me, by all Means, visit the Duke of *Somerset's* Country House at *Petworth*, before I return'd to *London*, he complimented me with Horses and Servants to conduct me, and fearing that the Duke might be gone to *London*, he made Lady *Temple* write to the Dutcheſs. The Duke receiv'd me very civilly. He lives retir'd in the Country for the most part, if a Man can call it a Retirement, where there are above a hundred Servants, a finer Palace than the King's, and as good a Table. I am of Opinion, a moderate Income is as essential to Retirement, as it is to the Happiness of Life, and that a Man of boundless Riches has too great a Task upon his Hands. I was constantly thinking, in this stately Palace, of Sir *William Temple's* solitary House and little Garden, which made me dream of the Pleasure of a private and quiet Life. I did not think of any thing else, and return'd to *London* with all the Expedition that could be, to prepare Things for my Departure.

Now, Sir, I take Leave of you, and will not think my long Travels into *England* to be in vain, if my Letters give you any Pleasure, or if they hinder you now, that you are so near, from coming over, and doing that common and unprofitable Thing call'd a *Tour into England*.

LETTERS



LETTERS

Concerning the

French Nation, &c.



LETTER I.

S I R,



THE Pleasure I have had in sending Letters to you concerning *England*, and that which you say they have given you, puts me into the Humour of writing to you about *France*, and the *French Nation*. Here 'tis easy for me that am unpolish'd and a *Swiss*, to excuse myself (were it necessary) from so bold an Undertaking: It will look as if I had exercis'd my Parts and set them an Edge on another Nation, before I begun with the *French*.

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As to the Objection of my venturing to characterize Nations, without being frighten'd at the private Characters of the Men that compose them, I am of Opinion 'tis not so bold an Enterprize as it seems to be at first. Men change and differ from one another, but the Difference does not alter the Character of the Nation; it only introduces some Diversity. I must desire you to observe, that when I speak of the *French* Nation, I mean by it the greatest Part of the People, and that I except Persons of Merit out of it; they are above the Character of their Nation, and must be treated of distinctly. I likewise except such other Persons, as are distinguish'd on Account of their Constitutions, or any other particular Circumstances, for my Design is to speak of the Multitude only, that is, the *French* Nation.

The *French* are more forward in shewing their best Side, and anticipating People's Expectation than any other Nation: 'Tis by that way which first offers itself, that I must begin to make them known to you. They are easy of Access, civil, obliging, and forward; they appear to be sincere, open and very affectionate; they love to please People, and to do it readily and with a good Grace. They seem to be cut out for Society in every respect; they love Mankind, and deserve to be loved. But they are not, for the most part, content with the Sentiments of Friendship which they inspire; they must be applauded and admired, and particularly by us Strangers. They look upon us as if we were made for that End, and as it were to admire them before-hand; it must be own'd they are not altogether mistaken, and that Strangers are, generally speaking, what they suppose them to be. The Things they
would

would have us admire in them above the rest, are their Wit, their Sprightliness, Politeness, and Behaviour. They think a Man's greatest Merit consists in them, and pretend to be distinguish'd from the rest of the World on that score; and it must be allow'd, that the Character of the *French*, with respect to their Vivacity, and the good Opinion they have of themselves, is distinguish'd from that of all other Nations. 'Tis true, all have some Presumption, and Self-love is so much diffus'd among Men, that People in general, as well as private Persons, have each their Share, and make themselves ridiculous by the Advantage which they pretend to have of others. But it varies according to its Object; some value themselves one way, and some another, and this is it that partly forms their different Characters. Vivacity, and the Pleasure it gives the *French*, are the principal Things that shew theirs.

But this Vivacity, which is their known Character, has the same Fate with such as are equivocal or ambiguous, and depend only on Opinion; for if some are charmed with it, and think the *French* the first Nation in the World, there are others at the same time that have no Regard for it, but, on the contrary, think it disagreeable. They pretend that Men ought, for the most Part, to be cool and plain, according to their usual way of walking, and that a sprightly Nation, that speaks nothing but Wit, deserves to be admired much after the same Manner that another Nation should be, that never stirr'd but when they danc'd. They maintain that good Sense is the essential Quality of Man, and that 'tis it which unites Men, and that this sprightly Wit, which they prefer to good Sense, and the Sentiments

ments of the Heart, may not be entirely what People imagine. They observe, that most of those who acknowledge this Character of the *French*; admire them the less, and that the more they know them, the less they agree with them, and that they see thro' the Varnish, which at first is dazzling and pleasant; and perhaps not without Reason. It may even be true that these fair Appearances, which are nothing at Bottom, are the very Things which make People afterwards not only esteem the *French* less than they deserve, but even to hate and despise them: We are always very ready to hate those that impose upon us, and a little Hatred is sufficient to hinder us from judging equitably. Be it as it will, and without any Prepossession either for or against the *French*, this must be own'd, that by a slender Knowledge of them, we easily discover that their over-valuing Wit, Behaviour, and Outside, makes them neglect what is solid, that they are fond of Trifles, and that, generally speaking, they don't know the Value of Things.

'Tis even apparent, that by their Neglect of cultivating good Sense, and valuing it enough, they are apt to mistake it; for if it be not accompany'd with Expressions and Ways to set it off to Advantage, they are often so far deceiv'd as to take it for Stupidity. We have seen their Men of Wit perplex'd with the good Sense and Coolness of a Stranger, without knowing the Reason of their Perplexity. They must be much more embarrass'd when a Man of known Merit does not shew much Wit; I believe those that observe this Defect in him, whisper it to their Friends as a Thing that ought to be kept secret. They are eager after Fame, and most of them look upon it as the ultimate End of Merit. This is another Effect

Effect of their small Regard for good Sense, and their setting too high a Value on Vivacity, Wit, and Outside. Thus they seek after that Kind of Merit, more than any other, that makes the greatest Noise; or they seek rather after Noise, which they look upon to be inseparable from Merit. As for that which consists in renouncing Chimeras and extravagant Designs, and leading a quiet and private Life, or that which is its own Reward and self-sufficient, they look upon them as fine Ideas to be found nowhere but in Books; and the Name of a Philosopher, or a Man that would reduce his Ideas to Practice, is with them a Kind of an Affront. Accordingly we find no Philosophy in their Character; so they feed themselves with Shew, and prefer the Pleasure of the Outside to what is real, if I may be allow'd to say so, without philosophizing too much; and 'tis observ'd, that, on many Occasions, they would have their Happiness consist in being thought happy. They are better pleas'd in being well cloath'd, than eating well; to be at great Expences, in order to be thought rich, even at the Hazard of confounding their Riches; to expose them to Danger, rather than preserve or enjoy them with Moderation, without appearing rich. Those that are successful in their Attempts upon Women, or would be thought so, and that have the envied Title of the Women's Favourites to encourage them the more, acknowledge that they would rather be look'd upon as Favourites with the Women, tho' they were not so, than be really in their Favour, without being thought so. These Gentlemen make a considerable Body in *France*, by their numbers; in which they reckon every Man that is well made; so that by mentioning

tioning them, I prove more than appear'd at first.

In this Country, as well as in others, tho' perhaps not so generally, People are strangely intoxicated with the Thing call'd Quality; and tho' the *French* are not so exact, nor capable of bringing as many Proofs of their Nobility as the *Germans*, they are however so full of their Titles, that they think there's some real good in them; the People believe it too, and bear with Ease the Disdain, which they look upon as the Consequence of a well grounded Subordination. These Gentlemen carry this Notion of their Quality so far, that even in extream Poverty, to which great Numbers of them are reduc'd, they are so obstinate, that they will not help themselves either by Work or Trade, and have no other Resources but War, Marriage, and the Court. In other Respects they look upon Idleness as their best Privilege, and the most essential Distinction between them and the Tradesmen, with whom they would have nothing in common, were it possible. The *French* are very fond of Authority and Command, which make another Distinction. They buy Employments very dear, to please themselves that Way; they never think of running in Debt, or being ruin'd, provided they get above those that were their Equals, and make a great Figure in the World. What can they do more? As the Taste of the Nation is bent on these Employments, there must be consequently a great Number of them, and some are often created to make them still greater. But if the Officers of Justice are very numerous in *France*, those that go to Law and are ruin'd by it, are numberless; the *French* have undoubtedly more litigious People than any Nation in the World.

World. When we consider this double Folly, we can't well avoid calling to mind two ridiculous Persons in one of their Comedies; and one is under some Temptation of making a more general Application of the Verse which characterizes them:

One is always a Client, the other always a Judge.

The *French* don't think much of Liberty; they are not satisfy'd to depend on the Prince in every thing they suffer themselves to be depriv'd of, but submit, even thro' Inclination, in that which is the most independant Thing that Men are possess'd of, and have the least Power to give away. A Word that falls from him, or is spoke by chance, is magnified, and becomes the Subject of a Decision, that sets a Value on Men and Things. Whatever Share of Liberty the Prince has left them, they sacrifice to Custom, to which they are Slaves. They make Custom, the Queen of the Country, the great Queen, no less than their King, the great King. 'Tis so! 'Tis not so! are their sacred Reasons to approve or condemn any thing; and 'tis a bold Action in *France*, that gives occasion to any one to say, *Is it not so?* if he has Courage enough to revolt any way against the Nation, by replying; 'Tis so, for *I did it*. There's however a *French Liberty*, and no doubt but you have often heard this Word, which they respect, and pronounce with a loud Voice in foreign Countries. This Liberty is no more than to have Courage to dispense with some of their Laws of Politeness, and not to be more formal than is proper; for a Man to be so daring as to lean in his Elbow Chair, when he is weary with sitting upright;

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to ask for Meat and Drink at all Times, among ones Acquaintance; to say that the Wine is good, when 'tis not so; and to do other Things of like Importance. If there's any room for laughing to think the Liberty of a Nation should consist in this, there's undoubtedly much more Reason to laugh, to see Nations where 'tis not.

They are very exact here in all the trifling Duties of Life: People take a great deal of Care to inform themselves about a Person's Health, after a small fatigue, and 'tis a Point of Civility to send him a Compliment upon it. An honest Man is not more scrupulous in returning a Pledge left in his Hands, than a *French* Man in returning a Visit. To make and receive them is one of their chief Occupations, and they think their Time well employ'd that way; a Life which they pass in Company is, in their Opinion, a Life agreeably spent, and in Order. Man, say they, is made for Society; and they are forming this Society all their Days, and will have it consist of great or small Companies, where they give one another an Opportunity of becoming Men. They almost think every Man an *Owl*, or a *Philosopher*, that discovers any Inclination for Solitude, not being able to comprehend how 'tis possible for any one not to be pleas'd with Conversation, where a great many polite and obliging Things are said. They are likewise very watchful for any Opportunity of employing a thousand little far-fetch'd Ways, that are become natural, as it were, by Custom, and by which they pretend to please. All this put together, makes up that magnificent Name which they call the *Art of Living*, and which they have Reason to call so, since they look upon it as the
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great Concern of Life, and that they don't seem to live for any other End.

People of this Complexion must necessarily value a Court Life at a high rate, and prefer it to any other; which is another Singularity in the Character of the *French*. They are Courtiers by Inclination, and, if I may say so, by Birth: They are pleas'd with obeying, and commanding; they admire Things easily, and a little Outside is sufficient to employ them: They think of nothing but to impose upon People, and to be thought happy, and they let others impose upon them, in their Turn, for they look upon themselves to be happy, if they can pass on the World as such. These noble Dispositions are still strengthen'd more and more by the Form of the Government, which is such in *France*, that every thing depends on the Court. So that Inclination and Interest, which are two powerful Motives, concur here to make great Numbers of People choose this kind of Life, and succeed in it. If a great Man that is a Courtier happens to give the King any Offence, and that he orders him to retire, that is, to go and live on his Estate, the very same Estate that he has taken the greatest Pains to improve, and adorn; yet he thinks himself an Exile: He languishes from the Time he becomes his own Master; Leisure and Liberty make him unhappy. The *Count de Buffi*, who made himself famous by his Writings, is a Proof of this: Some pretty Stories maliciously wrote, were the Occasion of his Banishment from the Court; and tho' one might think that a Writer shou'd not fear Retirement, it did not, however, agree with him; he wou'd write no more than what tended to get him out of it. The Letters which he sent to

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the King are publish'd; oh! what Submissions, what Efforts to be restored to Favour! But when he found there was no Hopes of succeeding, he became inconsolable, and fell upon writing Morals towards the End of his Days. He compos'd a small Treatise of it, wherein, after demonstrating, by several Examples, that great Men are generally unhappy, and that Providence makes use of all sorts of Adversity to make them sensible of the Vanity of worldly Affairs, he puts himself at last in the same Rank, and writes the History of his own Life: He derives his Grandeur from the Posts he had in the King's Armies, that is, from many Years Service, and looks upon his Banishment from Court as his Unhappiness, that is to say, many Years Liberty. There's a *Frenchman* for you made for Society, and to live with the Great, but so uneasy that he can't live with himself; I desire no other Proof of the little Value of this Wit, Politeness, and Behaviour that they make such a Noise about: All these Things are neither useful nor agreeable, but in the Commerce of Life, on which they make us dependant; and every Man that has no other Qualities, which is the Case of most of those that study them, is in a Manner lost when he is alone: He is abandon'd by himself, as soon as he is abandon'd by others.

But 'tis not only the Nobility that are attach'd to the Court, and prefer this Way of Living to all others; but, generally, People of all Ranks in *France* have a strong Passion to push their Fortunes, in which they succeed better than others: They travel thro' all Nations with that Design, they find a Way of getting Access to all Houses, and putting themselves into all Shapes. Even the mean People, that in other Countries
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think of nothing more than Subsistence, are here possess'd with the Fancy of growing Great; and some one has remark'd, merrily enough, that *France* furnishes all *Europe* with *Valets de Chambre* and *Cooks*, being the Employments that make People's Fortunes. The Governors to young Men, Dancing-Masters, Fencing-Masters, Engineers, are almost every where *Frenchmen*; and if People are wanted for any other Occupations, it is possible there may be found in all Parts of *France* such as will be very ready to undertake them. There needs no more to know the *French*, than to examine the good and bad Qualities that are requisite to make a Fortune, that forms their Character: First, I think there must be Complaisance, Assurance, and Forwardness, and that there be nothing either above or below a Man. These are, in effect, the Talents of the *French*, by which they get very much the Start of the Adventurers of other Nations, when they are Competitors. They are always busy about small Matters, that seem to them considerable; they think themselves very well employ'd, and are seldom undeceiv'd in one Trifle but by another. One may say, without wronging the *French* Nation, that 'tis among them a *Bâgatelle* is in its Kingdom, and that they do it more Honour than any where else. But on the other Hand, they may well boast of bringing it to Perfection in several things, and surpassing all the World in this respect.

I now return to that which forms the principal Character of the *French*, their *brillant* Wit, or I must rather tell you what Advantage they have by it, since they are no less distinguish'd by it from others than by Wit itself. When I observe to you that 'tis on that Account they

think themselves the first Nation in the World, and made to be admired, you may think, perhaps, that 'tis because they must have more People of Wit than are to be met with elsewhere. But that, Sir, is not the Reason. The *French* are witty in general, the Nation shines with it, and their Wits have no other Advantage than to be the first among their Equals. You will say then you understand by this, that Nations have the Advantage of each other, and are distinguished by *the more* and *the less*. As the *French* have more Wit, and the *English* more good Sense, with other Advantages: But you have not found it out yet. The *French* have not only more Wit than other People; but they have Wit, and others have none. As the *Greeks* distinguished themselves formerly from all other Nations, not according to *the more* and *the less*, but absolutely without the Degrees of Comparison, and look'd upon all other People as *Barbarians*, so the *French* distinguish themselves now from the rest of the World: They are the *Greeks* of our Times, and other Nations serve them for Proverbs. If other Men happen to have any Wit, and that it can't be contradicted, then they say 'tis not impossible but there may be some in the World that resemble the *French*. Their Title to Wit (as a Thing that is their Property) is so well established among them, that I am persuaded, a *Frenchman*, tho' ever so little conceited, and that has no great Opinion of himself, with Regard to his own Countrymen, will make no Hesitation, at the same time, to think he has more Wit than any Stranger, and that he need go no further, than not to mortify us unseasonably, by treating a *German* as if it were in his own Power to become a *Frenchman*. They extend this Act of Justice

Justice so far as even to allow we have good Sense, which they think may be found in all Countries, and which they leave us as the Remnant or Dregs of Wit, but think it sufficient to secure us from the Contempt of those that have Wit. You see, Sir, what 'tis that saves us from the Contempt of the *French*, even such of them as are the Glory of the Nation, and vouchsafe to take so much Notice of other Men, as to make Comparisons which gives them a better Relish of the Prerogative they possess. But tho' they should think themselves above us in every thing, so far as even to despise us, which may sometimes happen, it would be wrong in us to take it ill or to call them to an Account for a Superiority which is generally establish'd among them, and which they have receiv'd from their Fathers. Few of them find any Occasions of renouncing it; and 'tis certain there are not many in a Condition to take the Advantage of such Opportunities as offer. Let us leave these *Frenchmen* in Possession of their Character in its utmost Extent, let us make a Party, and laugh at Opinion with every thing it establishes among Men. In Consequence of a Partition that gives Wit to some and leaves good Sense to others, Men of Wit ought to be allow'd to raise themselves above discreet judicious People and to make a Jest of them, and these should be hinder'd from finding Fault with it. On the other Hand, People of good Sense ought to be permitted to make Use of it to examine the Manners and Ways of the others, and to set a Price upon them. I embrace You, Sir, &c.



LETTER II.



Am still writing to you, Sir, about the *French*; and what I have not accomplish'd in my last Letter, I will in this: I'll tell you what Good can be said of them, as well as the Ill, and I hope Things will happen accordingly, and am preparing to write to you with Pleasure.

The *French* have match'd their Character very well, and form'd a convenient and regular Plan of Life in its Kind; that is, with Regard to Society, to which their Inclinations lead them. They have not all these starch'd Ways that are disagreeable in Company, and no doubt have been introduc'd thro' a Defect of Friendship and Confidence. They have not that false and affected Gravity, which rather conceals the Want of Merit, than Merit itself. They don't entangle themselves in continual Formalities; they make no Presents to one another, but such as may be well receiv'd, and which are as so many Snares for those that accept of them. They don't interrupt a Man that is discoursing of the common Concerns of Life by Compliments; they know how ridiculous 'tis, and on such Occasions where they are necessary, they make them in few Words. We are not perplex'd about chusing their Titles, and giving them magnificent ones, against the Grain; we are excus'd for a plain *Monsieur*, which serves for all every where, especially

especially from a Stranger. They have a great many decent and becoming Ways, that are always the same, to which 'tis easy for one to conform himself, and which we adopt with Pleasure; and there's no doubt but *France* is the Country where every thing that is decent and ornamental in Society is best known. 'Tis Pity they don't stop here, and that they should add a great Number of Niceties and fantastical Ways, that vary and depend on the Fashion, to proper and settled Rules of Decency. These Whimsies are very perplexing and troublesome to a Stranger, that is unacquainted with them, and is desirous of accommodating himself to the Ways of the Country. 'Tis true they are civil enough to overlook our Mistakes in Things of that Kind, as well as those we make in speaking their Language, which is too difficult for us; and 'tis what they may well do, since 'tis impossible for us to follow them in all their Finesses, which require more Attention than any Language or Behaviour are worth. They not only pass by such sort of Errors as these, but even give themselves the Trouble of correcting them, when they think we are grown familiar enough with them to bear it. They take a great deal of Pleasure in all Respects to reprove and instruct a young Stranger that is docible, and are very ready to receive him into their Favour; and by all these Civilities to Strangers, 'tis very obvious, that they know the Duties of Life, in order to put them in Practice. I remember when I serv'd in the Army, which was then canton'd near *Versailles*, I went out to shoot, and happen'd to fire at some Partridges very near a fine House. It belong'd to a Gentleman that then dwelt in it, and that was retired from Court. He came towards me, and observing I

was a Stranger, he invited me Home to refresh myself. The Visit pass'd in Compliments, without the least Notice of my shooting; and at my second Visit, he let me know, after a friendly and polite Manner, my rude Behaviour, which gave Occasion to our Acquaintance; so that this rash and inconsiderate Action, instead of provoking him, serv'd only to let him understand I was a young Man that wanted his Advice. He gave me Instructions about my Behaviour, and shew'd me a great deal of Kindness all the Time I continu'd in his Neighbourhood. The *Frenchman* has a strong Bias to Friendship, as well to the close and strong Band, which properly deserves that Name, as to the agreeable Commerce of Acquaintance, to which 'tis likewise given, and he acquits himself handsomely of the Duties it requires. But, generally speaking, his Inclination is too quick, and instead of establishing Friendship by little and little, 'tis suddenly inflam'd, and comes to its highest Period in a few Days. From hence you may well imagine that 'tis not durable; accordingly we find they are charg'd with being inconstant, and fond of new Acquaintance. But 'tis too soon yet to conclude speaking of their Virtues.

'Tis certain that we Strangers meet with every thing among the *French*, that we can expect in a Country where we travel, and in many Respects all that the *French* themselves can meet with. They don't repulse those that desire their Acquaintance, and let a Stranger's Behaviour be never so indifferent, they will make no Difficulty, however, of procuring him other Acquaintances, and in general, all the agreeable Things he can wish for in a strange Country. A *Frenchman* enters into strict Friendship with a Stranger,

Stranger, that he likes, as easily as with another *Frenchman*. At three Days End he offers him his Purse, if he wants it, and will do every thing for his new Friend, who does not expect so much Kindness, and can scarce think it possible, or at least that none in his own Country had done so much for him. But laying aside these particular Instances of extraordinary Friendship, we cannot avoid being satisfy'd with the kind Reception they give us, for it may be affirm'd, there are but few Strangers that don't pass their Time as agreeably in *France* as in their own Country, and wish to be treated at Home as they are by the *French*, who are influenc'd by no other Motive than an obliging Temper, and the civil and polite Character so peculiar to the Nation. 'Tis true, if the Matter be examin'd narrowly, it will appear that their Politeness conceals some Sentiments we have no Reason to be entirely pleas'd with: We may say they are obliging to us much after the same Manner as the Men are to the Women, that they treat us as inferiour and weak Creatures, who have a right to be consider'd with a particular Regard, but that ought not to lessen our Obligations to them, since they may well dispense with treating us politely, because they can't have Pleasure enough by our Acquaintance to make it worth their Time to be circumspect, or put themselves under any Constraint on our Account. Besides, there's more than bare Politeness in their Conduct towards Strangers: They are very ready to believe us, at least the People of *Paris*, with whom we are best acquainted, and I am of Opinion, this is pretty much the Character of the Nation in general. Tho' they suffer considerable Losses by Cheats, that take Advantage of their Easiness, it creates no Diffidence in them

them towards others; at least, they don't seem to trouble themselves with any Precautions; in which Respect they shew more Humanity than the *English*, who are often very harsh to Strangers, without giving themselves the Time to consider their Circumstances.

People that behave themselves so handsomely to Strangers, must consequently do so to one another; or rather, that by being accusom'd to do mutual good Offices to one another, they come to treat Strangers after the same Manner, and to put them on a Level with the People of the Country. One may at least give this Encomium to their best Societies, that is all those that are call'd *Polite People*, and are distinguish'd from the rest, by making a considerable Figure in the World. They are generally very complaisant to one another, and ready, on Occasion, to assist both with their Credit and Purfes; and when it was the Custom of the Country, they assisted one another with their Swords. Those that have neither Money nor Credit, bestow freely their Pains and Trouble. Their Manner of obliging is expeditious and genteel, they love to prevent People's asking, and readily dispense with any Thanks or Compliments which we think we owe them for their Kindness. I have known some Occasions where their good Inclinations carry'd them very far, even to that Kind of Heroism, which of all others is no doubt the best. I speak of those People that desire nothing with more Vehemence than to be useful, and to oblige all the World, hunting after any one that wants their Assistance, any unhappy Wretches, in order to relieve and comfort them, and that interest themselves for all those they find in that Condition, with as much Warmth as they could shew

shew for a Friend or a Brother; and they employ their Wealth and their Lives after that Manner. We likewise observe another Kind of Heroism among them, which is more common, I mean that which regards their Bravery, wherein they don't give place to any Nation: The *French* Nobility reckon it the first of all the Qualities that distinguish them from the People, and they give Proofs of it sometimes. We have seen some of their young Gentlemen, that are form'd into Companies, leap from the top of a Bastion, to assist their Friends that were engag'd, risking their Necks by the Fall, to be kill'd in the Fight, or at last to lose their Lives, in case the Thing happen'd to be discover'd. I own there's some Excess in all this, and that their Bravery, might be better employ'd; but there's something noble and generous even in this Excess: 'Tis only proper in young People, and 'tis in favour of Friendship it ought to be cultivated. The *French* know what 'tis perfectly well, as I have observ'd already, and it deserves to be repeated to their Honour. On great as well as small Occasions, they pique themselves in doing every thing they ought for their Friends, and the generous Temper, so peculiar to the Nation, makes all their Devoirs very extensive. 'Tis this that renders the *French*, if not the best Friends in the World, (which perhaps might be too much to say of them) at least the most attentive to the Duties of Friendship, and perhaps the Nation where there's the greatest Number of Friends.

But there's something very whimsical at the same time in all this; the *French* are so far from pretending to any Encomium on Account of this generous Temper, which People would be very ready to applaud, and by that in some Measure discharge

discharge their Obligations, that we see the Title of a *good natur'd Man*, or a *good natur'd Woman*, taken in an ill Sense, and look'd upon as a Kind of Affront, that insinuates nothing less than an Idiot, a simple Man, which of all things is what they would least resemble in this Country. 'Tis for their Wit (which, generally speaking, they look upon as the Opposite of good Nature) that the *French* would be applauded, even at the hazard of being compared to the *Devil*, which is one of the Expressions made use of on these Occasions. It shews at the same Time what Kind of Wit they esteem, and how far they examine what Generosity is, or its true Value, which is little known among them. This we may say of the *French*, that they are so ignorant of their own Advantages, that they resemble the Stag in the Fable, that values himself on his lofty Horns, which may be fatal to him; and is ashamed at the same Time of his small Legs, that are very serviceable to him. This whimsical Humour of the *French* deserves to be remark'd the more, because in the neighbouring Nations, that are troubled with the Plague of copying after them, a great many begin to be ashamed of their Generosity, and endeavour to keep themselves clear of it. 'Tis to little Purpose to tell them, that a dull heavy Fellow is seldom good, and that Malice is oftener a Mark of Folly, than Goodness is; that it were even better for a Man to be call'd a Blockhead, with an honest Heart, than a Man of Wit, with a bad one. Reasoning is of no Use among all these People, against any Expressions that are in Vogue: They strictly observe that Saying, which is grown into a Proverb, that *'tis better to be a Knave than a Fool*; and it often happens, that by endeavouring to redeem themselves

selves from Folly, by Malice, they join both together, and then become wicked Fools. When they shew any Contempt for a Person, 'tis usual with them then to say, *He is a good natur'd Prince*, as if it were awkward in a Prince, more than others, to be peaceable and good. But that is their Business; they know what it is; I mean the Merit of a Prince, which is grounded on the brightest Qualities. But with Regard to private People, they must give us Leave to justify ourselves against their bad Proverbs, and always to look on Generosity, not only as that which forms a very good Character, but likewise as the best Thing that belongs to their Nation, and as the Fountain of all their good Qualities, that deserve either Applause or Imitation.

To Generosity the *French* have join'd Frankness, which may perhaps be the Consequence of it, and this Quality alone might well deserve a Panegyrick, and suffice to ground the Nations upon, which I would undertake with Pleasure, had Panegyricks been my principal Design; but you, Sir, want nothing but a bare Relation, for you make these Encomiums yourself. Among the *French*, *Frankness*, and to set off all the Copiousness they have enriched their Language with, and is much to their Honour, *Sincerity*, *Honesty*, *Integrity*, *Candour*, *Probity*, *Rectitude*, *Cordiality*, *Openness*, *to be down right*, and in a Word, *to be plain and free*, seem to be all fix'd to the Character of a Gentleman, even without speaking of any others but the People of Politeness, with which their Country swarms. If all of them don't really possess these Qualities, which I dare not take upon me to say, they do them at least some Homage, by the Shew they make of them; and this chiefly produces a certain

tain Behaviour that is peculiar to the Nation: I am even of Opinion, 'tis from thence that the Number of Gentlemen appears to be so great in *France*. Nothing is more necessary to procure that Title, than an Air of Frankness, because nothing agrees better with a Gentleman than to be free and open, and nothing is more common in *France*; every one assumes it, tho' properly the *French* Air, and a reserv'd Man appears to them somewhat singular and strange. They had Reason to derive the *French* Name from *Frank*, their first Name, and which they have only lengthen'd a little. And to lengthen their Encomium, I say there are more rash and heedless People in *France* than in other Countries, and yet they are less ridiculous; which no doubt ought to be much to their Honour, since a heedless unthinking Man is not only the least to be fear'd in a Society, but likewise the most agreeable, when he keeps within some Compass, and is without Design. The Generosity so peculiar to the *French*, which is the Foundation of their Character, and the *Frankness* that matches it so compleatly, are the Ornaments of the Nation. Should they cultivate these Qualities as much as they deserve, and make them the Center of the Advantage which they pretend to have of other Nations, People would be tempted to grant it.

There are several Things in this Nation worthy of Praise; but since they are the same in other Countries, I proceed to such as characterize the *French* in a more particular Manner. The Education of Children may be reckon'd among the chief. The Care which they take in that is much to their Honour. They let their Children be about them, without endeavouring to get rid of them, even when they are in Company. They
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hear them, and answer them after a rational Manner; they likewise endeavour to gain by Gentleness what in other Countries would be done by Authority and Force. 'Tis a Pity, since they understand the Matter so well, that they have not greater Things in View. For, in Effect, the *French* make their Children learn Customs before Principles; and some becoming Ways, that are handsome enough for the present, before any thing that may serve as a Rule to them for the Time to come.

They set too high a Price on such Things as make a good Outside, Behaviour, and Appearance, and too small a Price on Qualities that are more essential, I mean those of the Heart; or at least they make them very unequal. By this they lead their Children into mistakes, and Nature inclines them to the easiest Things; to learn Behaviour before the Duties of Life; to be pleas'd with what is in Vogue, rather than what is plain and natural. Does not this Method of moulding Children put you in mind of that which was practiced by an antient Statuary, in casting his Statues? He did not know (says the Poet) how to give them their just Proportions, but he excell'd in finishing the Hair and Nails: So in *France* we see the Effects of their irregular Care. The young Men become Libertines, and abandon themselves to every kind of Excess, as soon as they are ripe for it; and I believe one may say, without the Fear of being mistaken, that the Youth of *France* are the most lively and debauch'd in *Europe*. To be guilty of a hundred Excesses, to observe no Decorum, to rally and turn every thing that offers into Ridicule, is the Character which may be given to most of them. They strive to out-do one another

ther in these Ways, as if they were proper to young Men, and they succeed to Admiration. This Evil, which is almost general, ought to learn the *French* that even good Sentiments, without some other Foundation than Honour and Decorum, are not a sufficient Preservative against Corruption and Debauchery, where there's generally ill Company. One would imagine that the *French* must observe enough, on those Occasions, to put them out of Conceit with the Vivacity they value at such a Rate, and which they cultivate in their Children in lieu of moderating it. But I must tell you, likewise, that 'tis no extraordinary Thing in *France* to see some of these young People, which are so extravagant and plung'd in Debauchery, become afterwards very polite, and addict themselves to Good, as they did formerly to Evil; and one might say, that great Numbers of them had not been guilty of all kinds of Excess in their Youth, but with a View of knowing them, and hating them the more afterwards.

There's something very singular in the Character of the *French*, and distinguishes them from all other Nations; that is their Course of Life, consisting in Visits. This Article, which I have hinted at already by the by, deserves to be enlarg'd upon in a particular Manner; I don't speak of Visits which Friends make to one another, to pass away some Hours together, and enjoy the Sweetness of Friendship. I believe the same Thing is done in all Countries, and if the *French* have any Advantage of other Nations in this Respect, 'tis because they have a stronger Inclination to be communicative, and that Society is their only Study. They have establish'd Visits of another Kind, which are more general, where there's

there's room to observe some of the most remarkable Things in the Character of their Nation: These are the frequent Visits which they make every Day, as Work to be done, or as if there were sick People to be visited. All People of Education, and that dress genteely, make and receive Visits, of which they keep Accounts as of an Affair in Trade; and among the exact Duties becoming a Gentleman, they reckon that which regards Visits as one. They must be made after a handsome and genteel Manner, and free from all Trouble or Perplexity; such as would embarrass ordinary People, if they happen'd to be in any Place where they had nothing to do, and among People to whom they had nothing to say. Those that understand the World, that is, those that know what is essential in it, are out of the Case, and that they may never be in it, they have agreed among themselves to make short Visits; they do no more than shew themselves to the Persons they come to see, and as soon as they are seen, (especially if others happen to come in) they retire. The Conversation, during the Minute the Visit continues, must be kept up, as much as if they had something to say to one another, and it generally is, tho' we don't see what 'tis that supports it, there being nothing, properly speaking, that can be called a Subject for Conversation, and in this lies all the Cunning. There People shew themselves on their best Side, that is their Wit, if they have any, and every one in this Country has more or less of it; for Visits have their proper Stile, which is as much owing to Rote, as what is free or natural, and the first seldom fails here. None but a Man of good Sense,
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and a Stranger to the Company, can be embarrassed at these Visits; but such a Person may come off very well after another Manner: Silence is allow'd on these Occasions, while any one is speaking, and a Man is always sure to find somebody speaking at the visiting Hours; that is, that a Man may be a Spectator if he pleases, and that this Theatrical Way of acting is allow'd of in *France*. 'Tis very convenient for Strangers, and seems to be establish'd purposely for their use, and 'tis absolutely necessary that Strangers should be Spectators at these Visits, considering how they are manag'd. And it may be even true, that Strangers first introduced this Method, and that the *French* may have Reason to accuse us of bringing a fantastical Humour into their Art of Living; but be it as it will, there are some *French* that adopt it for their own, and act the Part of a Stranger, and please themselves with the Shew; whether they really find any satisfaction in it, which is not impossible, or that Silence at a Visit looks like a Mark of Distinction, which they take a great deal of Pride in. For tho' a *Frenchman* avoids Singularity in some Things that are not regular, he looks for it, however, in others, where-in he expects to meet with some that may have the same Taste, and sets himself off by this Method as a Man that marches at the Head of others.

Some People appear at Visits to shew their Finery, which is properly the Thing to be shewn, being essential to the *Beau Monde*; and 'tis to it they chiefly owe their Title. Finery is establish'd in *France* more than any where else, and I believe it contributes to give a Currency to the Trade of visiting as much as Wit does,

does, and perhaps more, tho' there were nothing else in it, but Novelty and Easiness of changing, in which it has the Advantage of Wit. The *French* are much indebted on this Account to the Women, who leave their Houses, and run to shew themselves as well as the Men; when I say run, I mean an honourable Race, in a Coach, with a splendid Equipage suitable to the rest. This Circumstance contributes much to set off Finery, and to carry it even as far as Magnificence; for the Coach, together with fine Cloaths, makes even Women triumph, and exposes them every Day as a Shew to the People. This is the Reason that dressing is their chief Employment, they refine upon it above any thing I can say. 'Tis true, that with all their Care to adorn themselves, yet they no way depend upon it, and that they run no risque in making all the Essays they can think of. In other Countries the Women are diffident of their Charms, and know themselves too well to neglect any thing in their Dress. But here they are not tied to so much Circumspection; 'tis almost indifferent to them to cover or uncover themselves, to have their Gowns figur'd with Flowers, or with Dragons and Furies. All turns equally to their Advantage, and whatever Way they dress themselves, they are still fine; they have always something new upon them, and they please a-new the Men for whom they dress themselves, and who dress themselves for them in their Turn. I don't know whether the Women in this Country, who make as publick a Figure as the Men, whom they see every Day, have communicated their Taste for Finery to them, or whether the Men like it because 'tis the Gust of the Nation; but what-

ever the Reason is, 'tis certain, that the Men take as much Care to be fine as the Women, and that they become it as well; that dressing for Visits, and visiting to shew their Dress, are the common Employments of all the People, call'd in *France* the *Beau Monde*, which are considerable enough to induce me to tell you something of them with the utmost Exactness.

The *Beau Monde* put themselves forward, and keep the Vulgar at a great Distance; not only on account of the Rank which Nature gives them, but also for the eminent Figure they make in the World; and their great Expences, which must not be calculated with too much Exactness; and for the Diversions they procure for themselves from Day to Day, which they enjoy with more Delicacy than the Crowd. But the Way of living of the *Beau Monde* is chiefly supported by the Mixture of Men and Women, which is (as it were) its Foundation and Band. This is it that sets off the Art of Living, and the *French* Gallantry to Advantage. 'Tis by this, that the Inclination which both Sexes have naturally for each other, is awak'd and set to work. 'Tis by the same Way that the Advantages of each Sex appear with Splendour; the Desire of pleasing animates them, and 'tis here that the *French* Liberty is in its proper Station, and does Wonders. As they leave the Crowd the gross Pleasures which they disdain, or at least profess to do so, the greatest Part of them likewise leave to another Sort of People that Kind of tiresome Conversation, that turns upon *Morals*; which is suppos'd here not to be naturally agreeable to any one's Taste, or at least to those that have any. This is so well establish'd among the greatest Number of the

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Beau Monde, that the Word *Moralize* is apt to be taken in an ill Sense; it imports *censuring*, or *unseasonable refining*; and you know very well that in *France* when an Expression authorizes Custom, 'tis out of all Danger. I believe we must, after all, pass by this Dislike of theirs, and still look upon them as People of good Sense, that keep up their Way of Living, and know very well how to shun every Thing that is disagreeable. They can likewise discern what is agreeable. The *Beau Monde* have a System of Morality of their own, which they put in the room of the other, that is rigid and grown out of Date: Their Morality is gay and airy, it excites Joy, and maintains the Necessity of making the best of our Time, which passes away with so much Swiftneſs, and ends our happy Days when they are scarce begun. What they give out freely in Discourse on this Topic is not sufficient, there are some Works writ in a fine Stile to prove it, and to encourage weak People that suffer themselves to be carry'd away by unseasonable Doubts. It must be own'd after all, that we may do worse than enjoy ourselves, and the Sweets of Life, and 'tis, no doubt, in the *Beau Monde*, rather than out of it, that we must relish them. They are Enemies to Formality and Constraint, and give themselves up to a mutual and gentle Familiarity, that affords them an Opportunity of opening themselves to one another without any Distrust. The Collations, Gaming, Entertainments, Singing, and other Diversions are Part of their Morality, and they reckon Variety among the Pleasures by which they subsist: 'Tis there the new Fashions appear and gain the Society the Respect of the Publick; and

there, also, new Ways of speaking are introduced to embellish Conversation. As the Wit of these Societies is form'd on the Books that are in vogue, so the Books, on the other hand, are form'd on their sparkling and airy Conversation. These two Things circulate Wit and genteel Behaviour in *France*, and discover the greatest Abilities of the *Beau Monde*. The smallest Village has its *Beau Monde*, who distinguish themselves from others, and keep up the Honour of the Place and the Nation. And 'tis not the young People only that compose these Societies; even the aged are no less pleased with them, and think they are no way unfit for them; or more properly, the People of Pleasure and Gaity in *France* never grow old; they always preserve the Character of Youth, and relish Pleasure to the last.

What can a Man say of all this? Must we gallantly place the Course of Life of the *Beau Monde* among the Things that ought to be admir'd in *France*? Or shall we examine it like *Philosophers*, or People that *Moralize* and propose it as a Question? Shall we grant that to pass away Life agreeably, it must be in Pleasure, that is renew'd every Day? Or among People that are more voluptuous, or addicted to Pleasures than they? Shall we assert, that 'tis essential to a plain and uniform Course of Life to be only intermix'd with Pleasure, and that too with Discretion? Must we approve of the extraordinary Liberty the Women take in *France*? And shall we agree, that the frequent and free Communication between both Sexes, preserves them from gross Corruption, into which some of those Women fall in other Countries, whom they endeavour to shut up? But
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to decide this Question, we may propose another, that is, if the Character of the fair Sex, which in Truth, and according to the Practice of so many other Nations, ought to be private and retired, if this Character, I say, is not wounded and destroy'd by the Way of Living establish'd in *France*, and if it be so, then I would know which of these two Inconveniencies is the greatest: Not to be able to hinder some Women, now and then, from falling into Temptation, out of which they escape, or to see Women, in general, every Day of their Lives depart from the Character of their Sex, and corrupt their Minds, and yet that nothing that passes in this respect should be look'd upon as Pranks. 'Tis true, that “ (f) to the Women of the World, a “ Gardener is a Gardener, and a Mason, a Ma- “ son; but to some others that live more retired, “ a Mason is a Man, and a Gardener is a Man; “ that every thing is a Temptation to those that “ fear it.” But I would willingly ask, if what has cured the Women in *France* of Temptation, is not like that which has made some others fall into it, in other Countries; if Women, that see Men every Day without any Reserve, don't after their Way, that is, with Delicacy and Frankness, take the same Pleasure which the others do grossly and with Precipitation; if they don't ruin themselves gingerly and by Degrees, as the others do by Wholesale, and at once. In a Word, whether a worn out Character of a Woman is not as defective, and as great a blemish to the Sex, as a Character that is somewhat torn. I would likewise know, if the pleasure

sure they take in the Women in *France*, and in the *Beau Monde*, is not something more gross and vulgar, than what they might expect, in case they were allow'd to preserve Chastity, Modesty and Bashfulness, which without Contradiction, are the Ornaments of their Sex; or, if the Comparison be not too coarse, whether it be not Folly in a Man to let others take off the Cream from the Milk he intends to make a Meal on. Let us talk grossly, and acknowledge a Truth which is much to the Advantage of the Nations that observe an opposite Conduct to the *French*: A Woman that once in her Life has had an unlucky Minute, when she goes astray, for which she is afterwards in the greatest Confusion; a Woman that takes a Resolution to live retired, on Account of a wrong Step which the Publick is acquainted with, is less corrupted, and a hundred Times less a Whore, than a Woman that spends her Life in loving, and endeavouring to please Men, in communicating and receiving the Impressions of Love; especially if it be true that Corruption is a Vice of the Heart, and that 'tis there that Shame has its Existence. But shall we really believe that the Women in *France* are content with the Pleasure which they call innocent and delicate, and that the *Beau Monde*, who are every Day set agog— keep within Bounds, and don't spoil their Beauty? Do all those Men that are the Favourites of the fair Sex boast in vain? Or are they discreet without Reason? Are all the Adventures we hear of in Publick nothing but made Stories? Do all the fine naked Bosoms, which seem to be exposed on purpose to invite the Men to *Materialize* that Love which is so delicate and innocent, produce no Effect?

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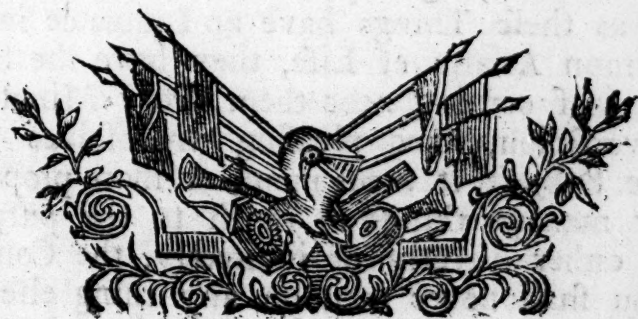
If it be so, then I much admire their Discretion, of which I don't see the Cause; I admire that the Women in *France* can stop in a Way that is so slippery, that there's nothing to lay hold on, and must consequently be dangerous. Let us talk a little clownishly once more, and say, that there's, perhaps, a hundred times more Corruption, more Whoring in *France*, among the *Beau Monde*, than in other Countries, where the Women have not the Liberty of seeing the Men; and that after all, the great Secret that preserves People from falling into Temptation, is to fear it, and not to expose themselves to it. Let us be Philosophers as well as Clowns, and say of the *French*, that they have found out the Secret of making Life agreeable: They resemble a Company of Travellers, that endeavour to make their Journey as easy as possible, sometimes getting into a Valley, at other times looking for a Shade of Trees, and reposing themselves where-ever they find any cool; but run a risque in the mean time of losing their Way, and not coming in time to their Inn. Others that have not this Art, go on openly, and keep the Plain; they see before them the Place they are going to, and employ themselves more about it than about their Fellow-Travellers, and the Pleasure they might take on the Road; they are fatigu'd, but at last come to the Place. In short, the *French* make Life a Sport, or a Walk: Others a Journey, which is a serious Affair. Every one of these Ways has its Advantages, and its Inconveniencies, according to the Manner of considering them; 'tis our Business not to mix them, and to see what is proper for us. Let me make some small amends for my super-abundant

dant Philosophy, and the Ill I have said of the *Beau Monde* of the *French*, by an Encomium that is due to them, a Word on their Men of Merit, which requires a distinct Article.

A *Frenchman* of Merit has pretty near the same Qualities with Persons of Merit in other Places; since there can be but one Kind of true Merit among Men, and he has over and above all the Agreeableness peculiar to the *French*: One is not at the Trouble of guessing at him, his Behaviour makes him transparent, (if I may use that Expression) and shews all his Merit, and 'tis in him that the Wish of one of the Antients, with regard to Virtue, is accomplish'd: One may see Virtue in him, as it were, with the Eye, and it makes People love him passionately. In Effect, we feel ourselves hurry'd towards a *Frenchman* of Merit; we would be like him, and are griev'd that all are not so; we may depend upon him, and believe what he says without any Scruple: Probity, Honour and Generosity appear in him, in some Manner, as in their Fountain: 'Tis he that diffuses it among the *French*, and gives them the vogue in which we see them. He possesses the good Qualities of his Nation, and he happily improves every thing in them, but the Defects which he rectifies: If he shines in Conversation, 'tis to say things that are obliging, to defend those that are attack'd, or to act in such a Manner that People may be pleas'd with themselves. He succeeds so well in this, that every one follows him, well satisfy'd with himself; this is all they can reproach him with. If he gives any Attention to small Matters, 'tis because he would not neglect any Occasion of pleasing; and he does it with so good a Grace, that

that People scarce think themselves obliged to him ; it seems as if he had nothing else in View than to be pleased. In a word, and that I may not engage myself in too particular an Account, to be an honest Man, and to please is his Profession ; he applies himself to it, and he excels in it ; this is, in my Opinion, the most engaging thing among Men : He wants nothing, but to be as valuable to himself as he is to others, and 'tis not to be doubted, but some of them have that Advantage also. But what deserves to be remark'd above all the rest, and is much to the Honour of the Nation, that People with such Accomplishments are not so scarce as to give an occasion of crying out when we see them ; there are so many, that every Man who has any Merit, or can distinguish, may promise himself to meet some of them ; but I don't know if such a thing ought to be much wish'd for ; it may, perhaps, be Matter of Regret for the Remainder of a Man's Life, and may create a Dislike for the greatest Part of those he is oblig'd to live with.

I embrace you, &c.



LETTER



LETTER III.



AD I entertain'd you with a Description of any distant Nation that was little known, I would have the Pleasure, Sir, of telling you some new Things, and giving more Variety to my Letters; but the greatest singularities of the *French*, who are, I believe, the Nation in the World the best known, have nothing in them that is surprizing. I am come back to them again by a Way which is considerable, on account of the Price they set upon it, that is, their Behaviour and Turn of Conversation.

The End which most of them propose by it, is to put themselves forward, in order to give an advantageous Idea of their Persons, which seems to be their Design in speaking. These are the Ways by which they chiefly endeavour to push forward, Quality, Riches, Wit, Bravery; and as these Things have an Influence in the common Affairs of Life, they have the Satisfaction of coming near them every Minute in Conversation, and pleasing themselves with some Subject it turns upon, or more properly, they manage things so much to the purpose, that either directly or indirectly, the Conversation shall never turn on any thing else; so that they are like those rich Men that can travel whole Days on their own Lands. What
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you see at a Man's House that entertains you, is always the least, or the worst; he has a better Suit of Cloaths than that he wears, and more Servants, but they are busy: He has, likewise, more Wit than he seems to have, he has made some Repartees, that were thought good, and that 'tis good for you to know. You shall likewise understand that he is not over patient, and that he has been seen more than once with a drawn Sword; that such a Man, who is a considerable Person in the World, is his near Relation, and that he dined a few Days before with another, who is a Man of Distinction, a Grandee. These same Grantees, if any Credit may be given to those that are near them, are mighty full of their Grandeur, and would have others be so too; they observe a great many Circumstances, that may be honourable to them, and often harp upon them.—As to the common People, 'tis certain, they have the Faults of the Great, whom they imitate in every thing, and who are more easily imitated on the Side that abases them, than any other. If the Meanness of the one does not hinder them from pushing themselves forward; if the Grandeur of the others does not keep them within Boundaries, you may judge of the Character of the gross of the Nation, and of those that are placed between the Mean People and the Great, to remove, as it were, from the one, and draw near the others. You may likewise imagine, how curious the Conversation must be in a Company, where every one thinks he deserves the Attention of the rest, and labours for it. Among People that have no other View than to impose on one another, Strangers, who they think may be more easily deceiv'd,

deceiv'd, must of course be well receiv'd, and 'tis not impossible but the good Reception we meet with in *France*, may in some measure be owing to this. On that score we ought not to examine the Affair any further, but to let them please themselves with all their Grandeur. Let us proceed to their Behaviour.

The free and sprightly Behaviour of the *French* does not seem to me in the general, to be so very good as some imagine, nor so very bad as others make it. It gives a Man room in the common Affairs of Life, to get above Constraint, and the same things don't constrain all sorts of People; so that it must produce various Effects, according to the Difference of the Persons that have it. In a Man of Merit, 'tis becoming and agreeable; it shews him to the best Advantage, and makes him the Delight of all those that converse with him. In a Man without Merit, or a Blockhead, it turns into Impudence, and makes him a troublesome Blockhead, that thinks he may do any thing under the Protection of his Behaviour, and is guilty of a great many ridiculous things, in order to set it off. The Mischief of this Partition is, that tho' there's a great Number of Persons of Merit in *France*, yet you must be plagu'd with a great many Blockheads before you meet with one Man of Merit, and that the Agreeableness which a frank and easy Behaviour adds to him, cannot, by a great deal, make you amends for the other's Impertinence, which is occasion'd by it. There is another Evil in it likewise, that ought to be taken notice of, it makes People ridiculous that don't derive it from Nature, but would assume it. Every Nation has such Ways as are proper for them, because they re-

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sult from the Character of the Mind, and every Nation has a proper Character. The only Way of pleasing, is to cultivate it, and not to keep too close to these Ways, because they follow near enough of themselves, and are undoubtedly no further good than as they are the Sequel of it. The *French*, that are imitated by so many Nations, imitate none; they follow their own Character entirely, and 'tis by that they happen to please. 'Tis not to be doubted, but if other Nations did the same thing, they would please too; each Nation according to its Way; and 'tis in that respect the *French* ought to be imitated. Variety is one of the Beauties of the Universe, it extends to Nations and their Ways, as well as to the green Fields; 'tis of the same Order with Nature itself, that is pleased with sporting and displaying her Skill; so that we are in the wrong to endeavour to blot it out, for by that Method we run a risque of spoiling a Character that is proper for us, without being able to get a better in its room. On the whole, if they understand, by Behaviour, some little superficial and sprightly Ways, which they think to adorn outwardly, they may, perhaps, find themselves mistaken; and that the best Behaviour is that which is taken no Notice of, as in Scents, 'tis best to have none, and 'tis an establish'd Rule among People of Taste to carry no Perfume about them. For tho' the *French* are the People in the World that picque themselves most on having easy, as well as genteel Ways; we may, however, observe an Affectation among them, which may be reckon'd as one of their Singularities: We see a great Number of them do what they call, *giving themselves Airs*, which is as much as to say,

say, that they would let others know by their affected Ways that they value themselves most. One might, I believe, (speaking grossly) call a Person that acted such a Part a Fool, or say, at least, that he appeared to be so by his Behaviour. This Kind of Folly, likewise, has its Followers in other Nations.

Politeness is a Thing we must not separate from their Turn of Conversation and Behaviour. To do nothing that is rude, abusive, or forbidding is not enough with them; they must win People's Esteem, and set themselves off by Politeness; and they are so dexterous in it, that you can scarce observe how 'tis done. 'Tis in this the *Frenchman* triumphs, and in effect, he is really come to so much Perfection in it, that even People of Sense may be pleas'd with the Shew. He is wonderfully intent upon Trifles, and submits with a good Grace to a Thing of no value, which redoubles that of his Politeness, and by that Method, extends to all the Actions of Life, as well as to all Sorts of Conversation: His least Actions and his least Motions are adorn'd with it, he stretches out his Hand politely, and draws it back politely. He offers it to a Woman going from one Room to another, and runs to do it just as if the Passage were difficult, or the Track dangerous. He runs in the same Manner to take up a Glove, or a Handkerchief fallen to the Ground, with as much Precipitation, as if he were to take them out of the Fire; for there's something more in that, than bare taking up a Glove, or a Handkerchief. At Table, likewise, he does something more than to help his Neighbour with clean Hands; he makes Protestations that he has not touched what he is going to help him with, and treats him
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with Politeness, even at the hazard of passing for a Man that is ill. He is not content with telling in a plain and natural Way what he has to say, that would not be polite: He tells it by *Honour* and by *Favour*; the most indifferent Thing becomes a *Favour* with him: He is so polite as not to say even an indifferent Thing without first saying, *Sir, may I be so bold?* or, *give me leave, Sir.* He has the *Honour* to see what he sees; the *Honour* to follow what he follows. He has the *Honour* to say what he says, and he accompanies his *Favours* and *Honours* with great and small *Inclinations* and *Reverences* which suit them. He has the *Honour* to be most humble *Servant*, most obedient *Servant*, to be without *Reserve*, with much *Regard* and *Esteem*, very particularly, most truly, most perfectly: He has the *Honour* to be with an inviolable *Attachment*, with an entire *Devotion*, with *Respect*, with a most profound *Respect*, with all *Sorts of Respect*, more than he is able to express, and more than any body. He has a great many more *Honours* I can't remember; every one endeavours to out-do others, and to have a fresh *Honour*, and never was Nation so fruitful, so rich in *Servants*, so glorious to serve. But their Politeness is great, in this especially, that they are not content to shew it to those above them only; but even to their Equals, these Submissions they make reciprocally to one another, and most commonly they have the *Honour* to be the most humble and most obedient *Servant* of those that have the *Honour* to be theirs. This is a Play not much unlike that of the Flies, that pass their time in going under one another; or, if I must speak more Honourably of the French Politeness, I say that all

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these curious Toys that come to us from *France*, and are admirably well wrought and finish'd, all these Trinkets in Cases, all these little Moveables with their Springs and Hinges, are a compleat Figure of the pretty People of this Country; of these Men that move artificially, and fold and unfold with a good Grace, and on Account of every Thing they have that is polish'd and curious, deserve all the Attention of People of the same Taste, that know how to handle Trinkets: For that is one of the Ingredients in the Character of the *French*; they ought to have Trinkets, they know how to handle them, and it would be in vain for Nature to make for us, that are a clownish and unpolish'd People, such Sorts of Presents, as we did not know how to enjoy. This Man that bows down before you every Minute, this Man that is so gracious, and has the *Honour* to be your most humble Servant, if you don't bow down to him in your Turn, if you don't entertain him with *Honour* and by your *Favour*, will grow stiff for you, and all his Brightness will tarnish.

Let us venture to talk grossly of the *French* Politeness, or if it be so very fine, that gross Words can't reach it, let us venture, at least, to say of it, or of a great Number of Ways which it establishes among the People of Air, that 'tis nothing but Apishness and Littleness, and that 'tis an Indignity to them to value themselves on that Account. But especially Strangers, who assume these Ways and set themselves off with them, ought to be mark'd for every Thing that is ridiculous in them: But, say they, these are only bare Civilities, that are allow'd to be done and receiv'd as such, and a Man of Sense ought
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not to be singular, nor thwart Custom. But, without determining whether a Man of Sense ought to submit to Custom, in Things of this Kind, or not, we need say no more than that a great Number of little ridiculous Things, every Minute repeated, amount, at last, to a very great Ridicule; that they make those that are noted for them ridiculous, in the ordinary Affairs of Life; that 'tis becoming a Man of Sense to be exact and plain in his Expressions and Behaviour, as well as in his Conduct, and that extraordinary Politeness and Behaviour, set off to so much Advantage, are as improper for a Man as too much Finery. In Truth, we ought to leave both to the Women, and at the same Time advise such of them as have the most Sense to despise them: What shall we do then with this Politeness, and where shall we put this Behaviour which People of Fashion are rather disguised with than adorned? 'Tis agreed that a Suit of Cloaths with too much Lace becomes a Quack Doctor, on the Stage, much better than a well-bred Man in Society. When an out-side is all over embroider'd with Politeness and fine Ways, ought it not to be sent back to the Stage, as a proper Ornament for it?

This Affair is too considerable, with Regard to those that imitate the *French*, and costly too, with Regard to themselves, not to say something more of it. I would willingly ask these Gentlemen, whether true Politeness ought not to be used at all Times; and if a Man that is thoroughly well-bred does not behave himself as such to all his Acquaintance: 'Tis likely that 'tis so, since Politeness is the out-side of Civility, which is always the same. True Politeness should be what we ought not to lay aside, and consequently,

quently should consist in quite another Thing, than trifling Ways, which People assume for those they meet by chance, and lay aside as soon as they part with them. But, perhaps, the *French* may really have this Mark of true Politeness, and that in the common Affairs of Life; the Husband is polite with Regard to his Wife, and the Wife with Regard to her Husband; the Brother to his Sister, and she to the Brother; and that the Persons they meet by chance have no more of it than the Surplus, which they think fit to give them. If it be so, we must make Satisfaction to the Politeness of the *French*, and agree that the other Nations have something gross and barbarous, in Comparison of them; but if they were like the rest of the World in their Family or domestick Affairs, the Thing would be otherwise, and we would be in the right to improve their Politeness against them. If Dissentions, Quarrels and Reproaches were common among them, and that their polite Behaviour was reserv'd for Neighbours and Strangers, we would have Reason to say, the People that are less polish'd, but at the same Time have Ways more regular, and almost equal for every body, are not so clownish or ill-bred as the *French*, so inconsistent with themselves, and so far below what they may be: It would be so, at least, for those they live with, and we should have no room to envy them on Account of a Politeness which would make us wish that it might not be too nearly related to these polite People. It would be well for the *French* that some Man of Genius would do them as much Service, with Regard to their Behaviour, Politeness and Wit, as a Man of Genius did the *Spaniards*, with Regard to their Bravery.

ry. The *Don Quixots* in Wit and Behaviour are as great Fools as the *Don Quixots* in Courage; they are even more numerous, and 'tis certain, that the taking away Men's Taste for such Trifles as these, would be of great Service to them. It would give them an Opportunity of putting themselves forward by better Ways, and not to think themselves People of Merit, when they have nothing but Words and Behaviour, an out-side trimm'd and borrow'd. I pass on from the Politeness of the *French* to their Gallantry, to that which makes a gallant Man, and out-tops even the polite Man, and in some Manner makes him real.

They understand by Gallantry the Art of obliging with a good Grace, and embellishing the good Offices they do us with all Sorts of little Circumstances: They understand it to admiration, and set off the least Services to advantage by their Way of doing them. When you have received any Favours after their Way, tho' they have done something besides to oblige you, yet you still think there's something wanting, and you can scarce avoid bewailing the *French*, at the very time one would think you have the least reason to do so. The *French* Gallantry is the Effect of their generous Temper, join'd to their Attention to small Matters, wherein they excel; and it shews us that this generous Temper is not only excellent in itself, but likewise able to improve some Qualities which are of no value without it; that it gives a Dignity to every thing it extends to. They understand by Gallantry in Conversation, a turn of Wit, that draws with dexterity enough from the smallest Subject to flatter you. If it be commendable to flatter us,

and make us pleas'd with ourselves, this Gallantry is, no doubt, a thing that ought to be extoll'd in favour of the *French*, and we must like them, and admire them on that Account. But tho' the whole Nation pretends to it, yet this fine Gallantry requires something more than can be found in the Character of a whole Nation, and for a thousand Persons that please that Way, there are ten Thousand in *France* that displease by it, in endeavouring to imitate them: People that tire you with insipid Praises to your Face, and give you a Dislike to the *French* Gallantry. The Women, above all, are to be complain'd of, especially those of them that have Sense. Most of the Men wou'd think they did not understand themselves shou'd they entertain them with any thing plain or natural, or any other thing but themselves; they think that not to tell a Woman now and then, she is handsome and has Wit, would be to let her understand she had neither Beauty nor Wit. But the Women have enough to comfort themselves with, because the Men do the same thing, and entertain one another as the Women do. They usher Praises, or (to make use of their own Term) obliging Things into every thing they say. This is the Gust of the Country, and they manage it generally, as they do in some Countries, every thing they eat, which tho' always *sweeten'd with Sugar*, is still pleasing on that Account. This Singularity in the *French* is, in my Opinion, one of those that deserves to be dwelt upon a little.

Not only their ordinary Discourses have something of Flattery in them, which is troublesome to a Man of Modesty and Sense, and to every

Man

Man that is not cut out for that Kind of Language, and is ignorant of the Way of recoiling Praises, or answering them in such a Manner as to make them fall on those that give them; but even their premeditated Discourses are generally consecrated to Praise, as a thing the most conformable to the Genius of the Nation. 'Tis in this they excel in *France*, and 'tis in it they glory to excel. There's a Body of Men elected from among all the People of Wit, and the most famous Writers of the Nation, that even assume the Name by Way of Excellence, a Company consecrated to the Purity of Discourse and Eloquence, which by its Superiority of Wit, prescribes to others, and directs them. Every one of them, on being receiv'd into this Body, makes a Discourse, as it were, to shew a-new, and in Person, that he is worthy of the Choice they made of him; and this Discourse, that will serve for a Model to others, and shews on what Foundation an Orator ought chiefly to exercise himself, must contain Panegyricks; some for the Living, and some for the Dead. There they praise, as it were by Law, Men that have been already prais'd, and must be always prais'd a-new for the time to come. They praise them just as People shoot at a Mark, they list them with Praises. They that praise will receive in their turn the Praises they gave to others, and these learned Men that are placed, as it were, at the Head of the *French* Nation, will, no doubt, continue the Custom of Praising, and making——the noblest Action of human Understanding consist in Praise. If the Panegyricks I have spoke of are not sufficient for that End, those they put before their Books, to wit, their Epistles Dedicatory, will do it completely;

pleatly: There they praise with Magnificence, not only a Man of an ordinary Rank, but even an unworthy one, and spoil a good Book by a Dedication, which is quite contrary to it. In short, this is the Country where they praise at any rate, and where Praise by being given to every Body, neither distinguishes nor properly deserves the Name. It serves to shew the Abilities of him that praises, if he is ingenious enough to find new Encomiums, or to give a new Turn to those that are worn out. Let us speak plain, and look upon all these Praises as base and unbecoming. To praise People to their Faces, whatever they are, is to suppose they love Praises, which is an Affront. To praise Men before all the World, that are known to deserve it, is Impudence. To praise the Great, who desire it, without doing any Thing to deserve it, is Baseness. On the whole, to make a Trade of Praising, tho' it were virtuous People, is a pitiful Trade; it hurts the Virtue which they praise. Virtue distinguishes Men; but Praise made so general as it is, jumbles the Virtuous with the rest, and renders their Example of no Effect. Besides, Men, in their utmost perfection, are but still weak, subject to Error and human Calamity, and very imperfect.

There's no Proportion between them and magnificent Panegyrics, which are as little suitable to them as Gigantick Statues are to Men, who, tho' never so tall, are but still short in comparison. 'Tis surprizing, that People of good Understanding and Merit, are not sensible of this Truth; that they should suffer themselves to be drawn away by Custom to act the Panegyrist, which is but a mean Character without some discretion

cretion, which is not much observ'd in this Way of praising; it puts the honest Man on a level with the Flatterer, and, perhaps, with the Forger too, when they praise the Living. The extravagant Politeness of the *French*, and their false Taste of Wit, have introduced this unworthy Way of Praising and Slander, which is as common in *France* as the other, and, which they set off handsomely, proves that there's something of the extream in the Character of this Nation, and of Ridicule in its Politeness. Let us consider the *French* by some other Ways, and let us give them the Encomiums that are proper for them.

There's one Thing, tho' not very considerable, yet deserves to be extoll'd in their Favour, they are the People in the World that behave themselves best at an Entertainment, and the most agreeable at Drinking-bouts. One would think it was for them that Wine was made; it makes them sprightly and witty, and 'tis then the *French* Wit shews itself in an agreeable Manner, and receives new Strength. They have a thousand little Songs to excite Pleasure, and make us renounce Care and enjoy Life, and their Moral display'd after that Manner, has its effect: We see how ridiculous our Cares make us, we would live happily for the present, and we want but little to enable us to do so. Of all Kinds of Drunkenness this is, no doubt, the best; and few People, any where else, can boast of having Morals that stick so close to them on Occasion, and stand Proof better. For, as the Drinking-Songs, or perhaps Songs in general, are sung more in *France* than in any other Parts; so 'tis reckon'd among those Things wherein the *French* excel, and have a Talent which they have not elsewhere. We must say,

say, besides, to their Praise, that in lieu of the great Entertainments in other Countries, the formidable Banquets where Crowds of People get together very ill match'd, and a Profuseness of Meats ill dress'd, the *French* make their Meals with few People, and few Dishes, and in such a Manner, that Openness of Heart, and an entire Freedom of Speaking what we think, are their chief Pleasure. But above all, their familiar Way of joining those that come in by Chance with the People of the House, and eating together any Thing that is ready, is something cordial, and more sociable, than Eating and Drinking: This is one of the Circumstances in their Art of Living, which is worthy of Imitation. There's one Thing more to add to their Pleasures; these People that take them so often, and seem to be cut out for nothing else, do it after such a Manner, that the Business they are intrusted with never suffers on that Account. In other Parts, Debauchery besots People, and those that addict themselves to it are fit for nothing: But here 'tis not so, a Debauchee may be a Man of Parts, that not only makes use of all Opportunities of gaining his Ends, but even makes his Debauchery serve for that Purpose. It seems as if it belong'd only to the *French* to extend the Pleasures of the Table as far as they have done it, and to make that a Subject of Panegyrick which is a Reproach to others, and I am for leaving them the Property of a Thing, which they alone know how to use.

There's another Abuse which the *French* have happily rectify'd, viz. Gaming, 'tis very much the Taste of the Nation, and, perhaps, none has more Gamesters in it. But they observ'd that playing for great Sums of Money is a pernicious Thing

Thing that ruins and makes People mad, and is only proper for some particular People; and they have generally agreed upon a Game for Company sake, which is a small Game, that must neither be ruinous nor troublesome, and where they have an Opportunity of displaying their Politeness and their Wit, which must render it still more agreeable. High Play is serious, and has something of Tragedy in it; this is no ways proper in Societies form'd for Mirth. Small Play, or Play for Company sake, has more of Comedy; there the Actors play their Parts with a good Grace, and say a great many pretty Things that have relation to the Game, and make it more pleasing. It has likewise an Audience to Honour it, and clap Hands. These are the little Family Comedies which are now acted in *France*, in all the Houses where the *Beau Monde* comes; every one of them has every Day the Pleasure to choose, either to be one of the Actors, or to have the Satisfaction of the Shew; but 'tis better to act, and here the Dignity is on the Side of the Actors. Don't you think, Sir, that all this is well contriv'd, and that half of a Life that is spent in Playing, and seeing others Play, is passed innocently? In reality, to loose Time is not the greatest Abuse that may be made of it, and by Means of Gaming, we shun Idleness, which is the Mother of all Vices. But, you will say, this does not do any Honour to a witty Nation, and we see, in other Places, People that don't set up for Wit, entertain themselves with what the Heart affords them, and pass away whole Hours without Gaming, and without being tired. 'Tis true, but besides that that leans too much to Seriousness, and can only be proper for a few People

of

of a particular Character; 'tis because they have not the Pleasure of beginning again the Day following, and making their Commerce the ordinary Course of Life. That is the great Advantage they have here by Play, it allows Men to meet Personally, and puts them all in a state of profiting by one another. That is the Way by which the *French* may chiefly boast of being of all Men the most sociable.

Of all their Singularities the Fashion is the greatest, and contains the greatest Number of Singularities; 'tis it that distinguishes them from the rest of the World. The Fashion is Custom in all its Rage, which seems to play upon them, and to make an Essay and Shew of all its Power. In truth, all People submit to Custom, and that is, no doubt, their Unhappiness. By this Dependence, wherein it suffices to do as others do, we dispense with examining what we do, and even the politest People that cou'd set others right, suffer themselves to be hurry'd away, and are afraid, in case they should do better, of being thought singular or affected. But Custom among all People is somewhat regular, and every one does all it requires of it. 'Tis not so in *France* where it has nothing fixed or settled; it is a Torrent that changes its Current every time it overflows, and in so doing puts all the Country under Water. From one Custom that has glutted them they go on to another; 'tis always to a fresh and vigorous Custom they submit, and Men, in all these Changes, find themselves busy'd without any Cessation, to submit always a-new. This Exercise, in which they take a Pleasure, is Liberty to them, in which they are like Prisoners that have their Irons chang'd every Day, and on that Account, might think themselves at large,

large. From whence comes this Singularity, will you say? Why, does Custom alter more in *France*, and is its Power greater than elsewhere? 'Tis because the *French* Nation is more subject to Change than all others, and is pleased with Novelty, and with a Kind of Uniformity at the same Time: Every one will be like others; and, perhaps, no Nation can renounce with more Ease any particular Liberty which others preserve. All this together subjects the *French* to the Fashion, that unites them in Novelty, and gratifies their changeable Humour, and they fall to it again insensibly in every Thing. All acknowledge its Authority, the Great, and even the King as well as others: The Fashion resembles Destiny, which the Poets speak of, and is superiour to all the Deities, and which *Jupiter* himself obeys. To enter into the Particulars of every Thing to which it binds the *French*, would be to begin again; for all that is done in *France*, and which I have mention'd to you in my Letters, all I can say more to you of it, is done by the good Pleasure of the Fashion, and the Matter is so copious, that I can scarce determine what Part to take first. Let us begin with their Cloaths, which is an Affair of great Moment with them.

A Stranger that stays in *France*, is surprized at the continual Changes caused by the Fashion in Apparel: He thinks he sees People that try all Sorts, without finding one to fit them, but in the End there's not one but does fit them. Every time they get a new Fashion they affirm very seriously, and prove by good Reasons, that 'tis more becoming, or more convenient than that they left off, and a Man would almost believe there's some Truth in it. But, however, at the End of a hundred Changes, all from

from good to better, they return to the old Fashions; that is, after a great deal of Motion, they find themselves in the Place from whence they set out. If any thing can stop them, 'tis the Changes of their Neighbours that imitate them; considering to what extreams they carry the Fashions, and what Pleasure they take in over-doing the new Things that come to them from *France*, it would seem as if their Design was to ridicule the *French* rather than imitate them. But that is not the cause, the *French* have Reason for all their Changes; they fit themselves with every Thing that is proper for them, and every Nation that would imitate them, becomes itself ridiculous. They seem, as it were, to be made for their Cloaths, and always for the last Suit they put on; and on the other Hand, we Foreigners, with every new Fashion, look as if we picked up some new Ridicule. What is surprizing in this, is that so many People shou'd assume it, and be solicitous in turning it off from the *French* and laying it on their own Shoulders: And they carry this so far, that those among the *French* that take upon them to justify their Nation on the score of the Fashion, alledge the Profit they make of it, by selling their Baubles at a dear Rate to the rest of the World: And it must be allow'd to be a good Reason, and that after all we ought rather to laugh at ourselves than the *French*, as 'tis usual to ridicule the Bubbles and not the Quack, when he sells his Pills at a good Price, and grows rich by his Drolling.

The Changes of the Fashion are as frequent in other Things as in Cloaths; but they are more troublesome when they turn on Things that are difficult to Change. Such a Man was un-

done

done by renewing his Furniture, which are yet new, but not of the new Fashion; another by getting his Dishes and Plates new made, tho' very well made already, but out of Fashion. This Man is displeas'd with his House before 'tis finish'd, because another Way of Building is come into Vogue in the mean time. That Man has discharg'd all his Domesticks, tho' they did their Duty very well, but they are not in the Fashion; for it seems Domesticks likewise are regulated by it, even among the Women, with whom one would think nothing should be chang'd in this respect. The Fashion allows them to be serv'd by Men, and by that gives them the Pleasure of changing. Sometimes they must have little Lackies, sometimes tall; at another time Pages, and some are for Blacks. At present, I understand they are for Mutes, and I can easily believe it, when I think of another sort of Domesticks which, no doubt, the *French* Politeness will not allow them to bring into their Houses, Mutes must be very proper for them, if we consider the Course which Things may take. The Changes of the Fashion don't stop at the Domesticks; People of all Conditions rise and fall with its Flux and Reflux, and a Man's Merit that is not overcast by it, must be eminent indeed. On the other Hand, there's no Character or Talent so abject or mean, provided it has something of Shew, but a Man may hope to see in Fashion sometime or another. Even Wit itself, the darling Idol of the People, depends on this other Idol which is much greater. Sometimes we have seen Points of Wit in Fashion, sometimes the *double entendre*; there was a Time when they spoke nothing but *Proverbs*; another time nothing but *Riddles*. Affected Words

Words and Bombast have had their Turns, and perhaps after the brilliant and the elegant Stile now in vogue, the Mode will bring the *French* to the Plain and the Rational, where some of them that had the Courage to go first, are already come.

Their Language also depends on the Fashion and resents its Caprices, and all the People of Wit that have enter'd into a League to defend it, can't put it out of Danger. The new Expressions introduced by the Fashion, are not only insufficient to make amends for those it retrenches, but the Alterations it causes in lieu of making the Language more perfect, generally make it more whimsical, and that to such a degree, that the *French* themselves can't always decide some Cases that happen. That is the Reason that their best Authors go out of Fashion, one after another, that is, they become ridiculous to most Readers. For the delicate Ear of a *Frenchman* is offended at a Word grown old, that alone is sufficient to give him a dislike of the whole Page, and to some Readers of a more refin'd Taste, a dislike of the whole Book, which one of their own Authors assures us he has seen, and takes occasion from thence to recommend Purity of Stile to Writers that wou'd have their Works read. But now the Fashion has established something very Polite for Writers, which I must remark by the way, they don't put their proper Names at the head of their Works; 'tis no more the *Johns* and the *Peters* that write; that would be too natural, and too much like the Days of *Tore*. The Authors of new Books are always, or at least very often, *Messieurs*, they take Care to advertise us of it at the Head of the Work, and their Works, that, in truth, have

have more of this Title of *Monsieur* in't, than of the *Man*, more of Turn and Expressions, than of Sentiments and Reality, are very suitable to the Title, and make it good. I am of Opinion the *French* owe this Politeness to an Excess of the Fashion, with regard to the Title of *Monsieur*, which it has dispers'd every where. People repeat it every Minute when they speak to one another, and they give it so often, that at last they give it to themselves: This way is only used in Books, and the Fashion has not yet introduced it into Conversation; but in my Opinion we are not far from it, for when the Wife speaks to her Husband, or of him, she calls him by no other Name than *Monsieur*, *Monsieur* such a one. *Monsieur*, on the other hand, calls his Wife by no other Name than *Madam*, and when he speaks of her, 'tis always *Madam* such a one. There's but one Step more wanting to make People give these Titles to themselves, and to turn into *Monsieur* and *Madam* these pitiful Monosyllables, *Me* and *I*, which are so often repeated in Conversation, and being unworthy to describe Persons of Quality, must be left with the People they are suitable to. That would, no doubt, be polite in the highest Degree, and I long to see it establish'd.

In short, the Fashion rules equally the most important Things, and the most trifling. It governs the Men themselves, and regulates their Conduct and Course of Life, as well as the Outside and Behaviour; 'tis it that orders a Man to be an Atheist or a Devotee, Knowing or Ignorant, fond of Wine or Women, his own Wife or another Man's. Or rather, the Fashion in *France*, at this Time, prohibits a Man from

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minding

minding his Wife, or in walking, or on other Occasions, to hand her; that would be too much like a Citizen, and the old Times. Every married Man of the *Beau Monde* must let another take care of his Wife, and tell her she is handsome, as he on the other hand must do by another's Wife, and talk to her of her Charms; and Charms likewise depend on the Fashion; they are sometimes in dark Eyes, sometimes in blue. We have sometimes seen your hawk'd Noses in Vogue, at other times Noses something turn'd up, or flat, make a good Figure, and carry away the Bell from the hawk'd. The Fashion does not stop here, she discovers other Charms. At present she is in Bosoms which she has drawn out of Obscurity, and set off to Advantage, as one of the Ornaments of the fair Sex, and she seems to be fix'd there. It may likewise happen, that while she is at rest, she is meditating on some great Design: As she triumphs over Men in pushing them to display all their Bravery, even so far as to kill one another on Purpose, she may happen to compleat her Triumphs over the Women, by inducing them to display all their Charms. In this Case the Women of the neighbouring Countries, who are ready to obey every Motion of the Fashion, and always dispos'd to excel the Women in *France*, will be obliged to content themselves with following, without having the Pleasure of out-doing them. Let us come to some other Regulations of the Fashion.

They extend very far, as I have told you already, even to Looks and Postures. There's a Way of lying or sitting upright in a Coach, upright or leaning in an Elbow Chair. Formerly the *French* wore their Hats on their Heads,
and

and then there was a Way of taking them off; at present they don't put them on at all, for fear of disordering their Wigs, which the Fashion would have them respect above any thing else. For the Peruke is properly the Head-dress of the *French*, and a happy Amendment of a Man's Head of Hair, which Nature has made to mean for him by one half. There's a Way of eating according to the Fashion, a Way of helping one's self at Table, and helping others, which must be done artificially and with little Ceremonies that denote Politeness. Above all, one must be very attentive on such Things as others may have Occasion for, prevent them, and not to let them be reduced to the grievous Necessity of helping themselves; but in that, as well as in other Things, the Fashion is not confined to Behaviour; she proceeds to what is essential, and 'tis by her Decisions that any Kind of Meat is wholesome or hurtful, insipid or delightful, that it must be dress'd after this or that Manner, serv'd up at the Beginning or End of a Meal. According to her Orders eating is follow'd by gaming, of which I have spoke to you already, for 'tis still the Fashion that disposes of Time, and the Manner of passing it away, and she could scarce establish any that is more generally liked, and where the Dependence is more voluntary. She regulates the Kind of Play that is proper, and alters it from Time to Time, which revives, by the Novelty, those that grow tired, and engages such as have not begun to play.

And does not Conversation (will you say) depend in *France* on the Fashion, as well with Regard to the Subject, as the Kind of Wit? And don't People entertain one another with certain

Matters regulated by the Fashion, rather than others? No, Sir, 'tis here the *Frenchman* preserves his Liberty. He discourses concerning himself, and every Thing that comes into his Mind as much as he thinks fit, and I am of Opinion, nothing can put him under any Constraint in this Respect. But that the Fashion might not lose her Right to a Thing that is important to the present State of Conversation, the *French*, of their own good Will, make it turn, most commonly, on the Fashion, and speak of it with all the Application that so great a Subject deserves. Or rather, they respect the Fashion to such a Degree, as to speak nothing of her directly, or her Origine and Dignity; but they entertain themselves with her Ordinances, which they call *Modes*. They approve and vindicate them against any one that finds fault; they examine and weigh with Maturity every Thing that is equivocal or uncertain, in this Respect. The Question about Preference, between the Ancients and the Moderns, on which they run Parallels, and which is the great Question that employs the Wits of *France*, is not more debated among them, than daily Questions about the ancient and modern Fashions; they make Parallels between them, and observe how far the last Fashion has the Advantage of that which went before it; how much more becoming are the present Fashions than those in former Days. They reason on the turn of a Sleeve, the Genteelness of the Facings, on the Number of Buttons, and such other like Things, which they regulate and set a Price upon with a great deal of Exactness. A Man is said to have a Taste, when he applies himself, and is well skill'd in all these Things; there's Emulation and Glory to excel in them.

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To be ignorant of them, or neglect them, favours of the old Times, or, as they say, of the other World, which they think different enough from this below, to make them suppose that there's no room in it for all these Things.

In a Word, the Fashion leads and drives all in *France*, and the *French* submit to her in every Thing with a perfect Resignation. Oh what a curious History would that of the Fashion be, if we had one, and how much does this Deity deserve a Temple in a Country where she is so religiously ador'd! unless they would have *Paris* be her Temple, where she gives Laws, and where all meet to prostrate themselves before her and make her Offerings. The *French* resort to *Paris* to improve themselves, and those that have never been there are no more than Country *Bumpkins*, which are despised. Strangers likewise run thither from all Sides to be polish'd, to take for a Title of Merit, an Outside, and Dress, (which among them are Things capable of deceiving) the Honour whereof recoils on the *French*. By this Behaviour and Apparel, the *French* are not far from universal Monarchy, seeing all submit to them, but the invincible *Spaniard*;

Cuncta Terrarum Subacta,

Præter atrocem Animum Catonis.

which must give them pretty near as much Satisfaction, as if Men had submitted to them in another Sense, for Behaviour and Apparel are of great Moment with them, and they would think themselves in a State of Dependance, should they be obliged to follow others in Things of this Kind. What is surprizing in this, is that even the People who seem to hate and despise the *French*, submit to them, and acknowledge their

Superiority in this Respect. 'Tis a Miracle which can't be easily accounted for; to hate a Notion with such Ways and Apparel, and yet not to hate the Ways and Apparel, is as extraordinary, in my Opinion, as what they tell us of *Lightning*, that it melts Gold in a Purse without burning it.

Let us do Justice to the Fashion, as well with Regard to the Good as the Ill she does the *French*. The general and material Ill is, that she is as fond of Novelty as of Trifles, and that this Novelty is not accompany'd with any Profit or Advantage as it ought to be. She troubles and ruins a great Number of People, makes all Distinction odious, and puts all those that would get rid of her on a level with the Vulgar. And I don't know whether she is not an Obstacle to good Sense and the Liberty of the Mind; this is, however, true that the more prevalent Custom is in any Country, the Understanding of the Inhabitants is so much the narrower, and remote from Reason; and, therefore, the Fashion must consequently be very injurious to the *French*. The Good she does them in exchange is, that she establishes from Time to Time some useful Ways, such as the common People would not receive, perhaps, should they come from any Authority less venerable. By all the Changes she introduces one after another, even those that ruin some, she does good to others, to Workmen and Merchants, that grow rich by them, and to a great many others that get their Subsistence under them. Besides, the Fashion affords Matter for Conversation to an infinite Number of People of Wit, that would find themselves embarrass'd without her, and would scarce be able to support their Reputation. There are some People that

that will not allow of the Art of Printing, because a great Number of People get their Bread by copying Books. All those People, say they, would be reduced to Beggary, and there would be Reason to fear most of them would become High-way-men. One might alledge the same Reason against any that would introduce a fix'd or settled Apparel and Behaviour, and abolish the Fashions: All the fine People that make it the ordinary Subject of Conversation, would not have any thing to talk of, and consequently would fall upon their Neighbours. In a Word, the Fashion diverts the restless and changeable Temper of the Nation from Things that are important, where it might have ill Consequences; and inclines it towards such as are less considerable, wherein the continual Changes have their proper Use on Account of their Novelty. By this Method Trifles become valuable and important in their Turn; and the Character of the *French*, as far as it runs upon Trifles, is in some Measure set off by them. After all, must the Fashion be an Advantage to the Nation, notwithstanding all her Meanness and Singularity? In that Case she will overflow in *France* like the *Nile* in *Ægypt*, whose Slime spreads every where, and is a Benefit of Nature for the whole Country.

Adieu, SIR, &c.



LETTER IV.



Believe, Sir, I have still Matter enough for another Letter concerning the *French*, tho' I may, perhaps, trouble you with some Repetitions.

The People in *France* appear to me to be gentle and complaisant; in other Respects, their Character is not uniform, but varies according to the different Provinces. For Example, they pretend the *Normans* are cunning, the *Gascons* witty and brave, but much given to boasting, and so inclinable to set themselves forward, and to Vanity in every thing, that they are partly the subject of the Fables or idle Stories made in *France*. It may, however, be true that their Character is the *French* Character over-done, and that while a great many People laugh at the *Gascons*, they laugh at themselves at the same Time, without being sensible of it. Those of *Limosin* are reputed to be clownish, that is, not so polite as the rest of the *French*; for you must know this Country can't produce any thing that is clownish; that is its Prerogative, as every Country has its own; for Example, they say, there are no venomous Things in *Ireland*, nor Wolves in *England*. The Inhabitants of *Paris*, who must be consider'd as a distinct People, are reckon'd silly, that fool away their Time with gazing at every Thing. They are good natur'd and civil, and very mindful
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of good Offices. A Tradesman of whom you ask the Way, will leave his Shop to shew it to you, and if you call him *Monsieur*, when you thank him, he will think himself very well paid for his Trouble. Thro' all *France* the People are less insolent, and more tractable than in other Countries; this Conformity is a consequence of the Nation's Character. They submit to Authority, be it never so severe; they admire with Humility every Thing that has an Air of Grandeur, and rejoice as constantly as the Nobility themselves, at all the Chimeras the Court would have them feed themselves with.

The *French* Peasants seem to be miserable in every Respect; they are ill lodged, ill cloathed, ill fed, and have only from Hand to Mouth. And they are yet more unhappy than they appear to be; they are cut out for this Kind of Life, and the greatest Misery can neither humble them entirely, nor make them revolt: We don't hear any talk in this Country of People that are push'd by Despair to violent Resolutions, neither against themselves or the Government. 'Tis very extraordinary that the Peasants should be pleased with the Grandeur of the Prince under which they seem to groan; one would think their black Bread had a better Relish every Time they heard of gaining a Battle, or taking a Town.

The Handicrafts-men are skillful and very industrious, and they can't be otherwise in this Country, where the Fashion changes continually, and nothing pleases, or is sold, but what is well made; for 'tis difficult to please the *Frenchman* in Trifles, he sifts them narrowly, reasons and refines upon them. He stops and amuses himself with Pleasure at a Workman's Shop; his
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Money gives him some Authority over him, and it seems as if he took Pleasure in prolonging the Time, in order to make it hold out. Besides, not being over-rich, nothing but the Beauty of the Work can oblige him to buy it at a dear Rate. 'Tis likely the Workmen in *France* are somewhat indebted to the Women, they have some Taste, and besides that Trifles are properly in their Province, 'tis laid down here as an establish'd Rule that they preside over all Sorts of Work.

The Merchants are extreamly civil, forward and indefatigable in shewing you every Thing you ask for, and even more than you ask for; you would say, that as they are *Frenchmen*, they take a Pleasure in setting Things off to Advantage, you see them always pleas'd, always civil, tho' you have given them Trouble without buying any Thing; but to be even with you they ask extravagant Prices for their Goods, especially such as People covet most in this Place; Civility and Novelty which they are continually inventing. And they make us Strangers pay more than the *French*; they suppose he that has not some particular Ways, or that has the Air of a Foreigner, is chalk'd out to be their Bubble. Thus when a *Frenchman* finds they ask an excessive price for any Thing, the ordinary Phrase he makes use of to express his Resentment is, *I believe you take me for a Foreigner*; and the Fact is really so: 'Tis not easy to imagine how far their Assurance goes, and how much we are perplex'd when these People, with their extraordinary Politeness, endeavour to make us pay three Times more than Things are worth, and put us under a Necessity of suffering them to rob us, or otherwise letting them under-
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derstand that we look upon them as Robbers. I must, in particular, say something of the Book-sellers, since their Way of dealing with us shews the Idea they have of us as to Books, and that it must be such an Idea as Strangers give them.

These Gentlemen offer such of us as make the best Figure, and whom they would seem to respect in a particular Manner, the *Mercure Galant*, the Works of *M. le Pais*, some Novels in Fashion, some new Comedies; and if new Books are not found acceptable, they conclude with shewing us the Book call'd the *Courtier*, as being the best of all, and never refus'd by a Stranger. I say they offer these Books to the most eminent among us; for they don't observe so much Ceremony to such of us as make no great Figure, or that wear plain Cloaths. When *M*—— and I were at the (b) Palais, which is the principal Place for Books, we ask'd the Bookseller for two or three, which he could not find, his Wife, who happen'd to be present, did not give us Time to ask for any others; being enraged at our Presumption, she spoke aloud to her Husband, (who excused himself civilly for his not having the Books we wanted) *Don't you see these are Foreigners, that don't know what they ask for? Give them Chifflet's Grammar, 'tis that they must have.* 'Tis very true, I have formerly been thought worthy of the *fine Discourses of Mademoiselle de Sucderi*, that an honest Bookseller would have forced me to buy. But what Quantities of these fashionable Books, of these wretched Productions, are to be seen in that Place? Enough to infect all *Europe*, and to make us look upon it as the Sink of *Parnassus*; or, if we must have a more polite

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(b) This is a Place where Books and other Things are Sold.

Comparison, I say, when I see so many of these Book ranged, as it were, in Order of Battle, and ready to invade the neighbouring People, they put me in mind of the formidable Armies that ravaged *Europe* formerly, and after destroying its finest Ornaments filled it with *Gothick* Inventions. Romances make more Havock than any thing else, and 'tis with Respect to them that the *French* resemble Conquerors, that are not satisfy'd with carrying off the Riches which they get by Plunder, but send their Troops to burn the neighbouring Countries, and make them all tributary. This Business is rather melancholy than diverting, and requires our Attention. If it be true that Compositions of Wit, which are no Way instructive, and serve for no other End than to amuse the Reader, spoil the Taste, which is allow'd by People of Sense, what shall we do with the Crowd of bad Writers? They that are not content to put off their Trifles, but poison People by their Writings, teach Evil, and corrupt the Heart as well as the Understanding. The *Athenians* made *Socrates* drink Hemlock Juice for corrupting Youth; and if they are blam'd, 'tis not for punishing such a Crime after that Manner, but for punishing an innocent Man. What Punishment does not these Writers of Romances and Novels deserve, that disorder the Imagination, and poison the Hearts of thousands of the young People? They certainly deserve the Hemlock which *Socrates* did not; but the same Humour that got *Socrates* accused and condemn'd, secures them.

There's something very singular in *French* Books, which I must observe by the by, there are not only an infinite Number of Romances, Novels, and other Books on Love, but likewise

wife a great many Poems on the same Subject; and their Tragedies and Comedies too, and even their good Books, their Books of Reflections paint Love after a Manner that does it no Discredit; they make it one of those Qualities or Circumstances that are common to Man, and for which he has no Reason to conceal himself, or be under any Disorder. The Reason of this is in all Probability, that in their Societies, which are compos'd of Men and Women, they make Love familiar, and indulge it even beyond what might be expected in Youth, or, we may say, that Love carries Youth beyond their Years. This is the Reason that Lovers in this Country don't appear so ridiculous as in other Parts; but, on the other hand, Love gives the Nation in general, or at least such of them as are its Ornament, a Ridicule not to be found elsewhere. The Opera, above all, as 'tis compos'd and represented in *France*, is one of the Sources where the Nation, or at least the *Beau Monde* that has an Influence over it all, takes their Character. Love is there represented as a Thing that forms the Happiness of Youth, and is set off with every Thing that can give it an Air of Innocence, and make it agreeable to the Audience. The Dances contribute to it, and the soft Musick renders the Amusement very moving, and carries Love to the Bottom of the Heart. The Mothers bring their Daughters to these Shews, and there the Husbands meet their Wives; and after they have seen them a hundred and a hundred Times, they can't be persuaded their Minds are any Way more corrupted than before, or more than People that never were at an Opera, which is a Proof that this Kind of Corruption is come to such a Degree

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in *France*, that nothing can be added to it: Tho' that is the Spring of gross Corruption, 'tis still nothing with them; and even this is look'd upon to be no more than a Trifle. They know how to extenuate and render it less odious by the genteel Names which their Politeness gives it, calling debauched Men *the Women's Favourites*, and the debauched Women, *Women of Gallantry*.

There's a Rank of Men in *France* that ought not to have any room in these Papers, but their Manners intitle them to it, which are entirely opposite to their Names; these are your Abbots that have no Abbeys: They are a genteel People that pique themselves on their Politeness and Wit, and live only for Pleasure; 'tis among them in particular we meet with pretty Airs and modish Behaviour, Phrases, new Songs and Verses, and all the rest of those extraordinary Things in which *France* takes so much Pride. But these Abbots are not all without Abbeys, as you might imagine from what I have now told you, and that it was this Course of Life that excluded them. These Gentlemen are even trusted with Bishopricks, when Fortune will have it so. I believe, when a Stranger understands, the People of the World are afraid of these Abbots in their polite Societies, he thinks immediately that the Presence of such religious People makes the others ashamed, and keeps them within the Bounds of Respect, but never considers that they are fear'd because they are formidable Rivals, that often carry the Prize from their Competitors.

There's another very singular Set of People among the *French*, call'd Rakes of Quality, which must not be passed by in Silence. They
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are young Men that represent in Epitome every Thing that is bad and impertinent among Youth, or in the *French* Character, and at Court. In order to put themselves forward, and above other Men, they put themselves above the Decorum observ'd by the rest of the World, and discover their Assurance and Scorn on all Occasions. They affect to have even some Vices which they are free from, rather than shew their good Qualities which they may be endued with, and I don't think Virtue had ever more faithful Admirers that carry'd her to a higher Point, than some of these Rakes have carry'd Vice, to which they devote themselves, and in which they glory. If Heroes of this Kind form themselves, out of a Collection of the worst Things in the *French* Nation, they take care to pay the Nation what they borrow'd with Interest; 'tis partly by copying these Rakes that the People who don't see the Court, imitate it, and that the Court Air is spread over all the Kingdom. Strangers begin to follow the *French* in this as well as in other Things, and to make themselves as ridiculous as possible, by affecting what is in itself bad and ridiculous, and is no Way suitable to any but such as are cut out for Extravagance, and equip themselves with it as if it were an Ornament. These Rakes are, in their Kind, and in the Opinion of the Men, exactly what a Woman with a broken Reputation is among her own Sex, and it was necessary for *France* to have these two Singularities, that those who copy them might have Originals well mark'd for both Sexes.

There's another Sort of People not much known in other Countries, and which we often hear mention'd in this, with Envy and Contempt:
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These are your (i) *Partisans*; they are, generally speaking, very inconsiderable, but they acquire, in a short Time, immense Riches, such as put a Man suddenly in a State of pleasing himself, whereby all his extravagant Fancies are discover'd. Riches likewise shew us the Effect which change of Conditions produces among other Men: Grandees that thought of nothing but keeping themselves at as great Distance as possible from the Commonalty, now make a great deal of Haste to become the Sons-in-law of these Gentlemen. Ladies come down to them from a high Rank, say they, and throw themselves into their Arms. Such is the Power of Riches.

———*Vel Cælo possunt deducere Lunam,*

———*Et vertere sidera retro.*

But these Riches seldom last long; whether it be that these *Partisans* ruin themselves by their great Expences, or that they give People an Opportunity of stripping them. Think of *Lucian's* *Wishes*, represented on a great Theatre; the Actors appear in great Splendour, and attract the Eyes of the Audience, they make some laugh, others admire, and then they vanish.

There's room for Sharpers, in my Opinion, in this Place; they are very numerous, they excel in their Trade, and are reckon'd among the Singularities of *France*. I don't speak of Cheats, such are in all Countries, tho' in greater Numbers in *France* than elsewhere, because there are more Gamesters in it. By Sharpers I mean People that form daring Enterprizes, and Stratagems that surprize by their Novelty, and which they execute with Prudence and Bravery. All sorts of military Virtues are requisite to enable them to succeed in this dangerous Trade, and no doubt but these small Conquerors deserve

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(i) *These are People concern'd in the Revenues.*

to have their Prowess celebrated. Accordingly they have their Historiographer, but he has writ only the smallest Part of their Exploits. They are encreased since, both in Parts and Number, and are now come to such a Degree of Perfection, that if excelling in a Profession might intitle People to Encomiums, these ought to have their Panegyrist as well as their Historiographer. In all Probability 'tis the Necessity of making a handsome Figure, in order to be of the Number of those call'd polite People, that gives a Rise to these Sharpers that do all the Mischief in the Shape of polite or fashionable People. Let us pass on to those of better Distinction, and consider the *French* Nation on the best Side.

The Nobility here are truly noble on several Accounts; Generosity, Frankness and Honour, wherein they are very nice, and they don't distinguish themselves more by any Thing than the Sword. The Abbots dispute Civility with them, of which the Nobility was possess'd, and out-do them in the Article of Leisure, which was one of their Privileges. They are obliged to give it up, on Account of the Expence, not only to People of Business, but likewise to the Clergy, who, seeing that Riches are very suitable to Men and Dignities, have join'd them together, and make themselves as remarkable, on that Account, as by the Prerogatives they enjoy. Politeness, which seems to become Persons of Quality best, might likewise distinguish them, but the whole Nation thinks they have a Right to it, and so far the Nobles have but little Advantage of others, and there remains but one shining Distinction for them, that is their Bravery, which they carry very far. 'Tis not long

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since they piqued themselves on it so much, and so unseasonably, that they would have been exterminated, had not the King interposed, by punishing Duels with the utmost Severity. These Gentlemen form themselves for War even in the Company of Women, which are opposite Schools, but being join'd together, they make the Man of the World the gallant Man. They take a Pleasure, as it were, in living above their Income, and the Debts of a *French* Gentleman are almost reckon'd among the Things annexed to his Nobility. That is the Reason they are not so scrupulous in preserving it entire, as they were formerly, and that they seldom lose an Opportunity of re-establishing their Affairs, when they meet with a rich Merchant's or Partisan's Daughter; and the Folly of the *French* in Matters of Grandeur and Quality makes this Remedy very easy to them.

Give me leave to say something to you of the military Men, which I do the more willingly, because they are an Honour to the *French* Nation, and that I am best acquainted with them of all Ranks of People in *France*. There's more good among them than one would expect, and, perhaps, more than can be found in Societies or Orders, where one might reasonably imagine there should be most. I know not whether this be owing to the Danger which People of this Profession are expos'd to, or a particular Point of Honour establish'd among them; I have always observ'd less Shew and more Reality among military Men, generally speaking, than others. Their Friendship is stricter, and does not stand in need of so many frivolous Shifts. Their Out-side is more easy, and 'tis among them that the *French* Behaviour is corrected; Polite-
ness

ness is less refined, and Conversation more natural. Perhaps, the Reason of their having these, and other Advantages is, because they don't read the fashionable Books, which are, no doubt, one of the Sources of the far-fetch'd Ways we observe in the Character of the *French*. Besides, 'tis evident that War, or the Service itself, produces the good Qualities of the People of this Calling, for the Regiments that are of a long standing have more of these Men of Merit, and have even the Reputation of it. There's another Thing very particular in their Conduct, and is much to their Honour; we see them now and then quit the Army and become Religious; and 'tis common with them, on these Occasions, to make choice of some rigid Order, where they pass the Remainder of their Days in Austerities.

I believe I have forgot to tell you something that is much to the Honour of the *French*, or at least, that I have only given you a hint of it. They love their King more than other Nations; it seems as if all the Esteem they have of themselves, or their Nation, was united in his Person, and, I believe, there are but few *Frenchmen* that would not rather derive their Glory and Happiness from the King's Favour, than from any other Advantages which they might have. Their King never does them any Wrong; it must be always his Ministers. There's nothing good but what comes from him, and all the Glory he acquires turns to their good. If one should say the *French* adore their King, perhaps he would not say too much; at least their Manner of expressing the Encomiums they give him, is not very far from it; when they assure him very seriously, that all the People on the Earth would

think themselves happy to be under his Government, and are ambitious of the *French* Name; if they don't make him a Deity, they give him room, at least, to look upon himself as the Prince to whom all Praise is due, and they put themselves under a Necessity of giving it to him. The Truth on't is, their Love for their King, which is so natural to them, must produce something extraordinary, for the Prince that governs them now: Besides the Majesty of his Person, and his being possess'd of Qualities that distinguish him, and are agreeable to the *French* in many Respects; he extends the Monarchy further than any of his Predecessors, and makes the Nation more famous than ever it was, that is, he pleases the *French* in the sensible Part. But what proves this Prince not to be an ordinary one, and that they may make him the Object of all their Praises, is that he supports them without any Emotion, like the *Roman*, recorded in History, that had Strength enough to bear the Heap of Garlands and Flowers thrown upon him by the *Greeks* at the *Olympick* Games.

After all I have said of the *French*, and their Opinion concerning the rest of the World, I must say something to you, Sir, of the Opinion the rest of the World have of them, which is not entirely what they suppose it to be, and is occasion'd by their imitating them in their Behaviour and Apparel. These things are, no doubt, very conclusive, and give room for crying up this Nation, that is fond of being cry'd up; but, in short, they don't impose so generally on the rest of the World, but that there may be some that winch, and agree in their Idea of the Nation. They have the Concurrence of Strangers, that travel for their Pleasure; they will sooner

go to *France* than elsewhere. Many of them who have been acquainted with People of Merit in *France*, think of them with Pleasure, and affirm they have not found in other Countries any like what they saw in *France*. The *French* may likewise value themselves on Account of those that apply themselves to the Exercises, those that love Dressing, Furniture, and all Sorts of Toys and curious Trifles; while this Taste continues they will love *France* and praise it. There's another Party still more considerable in its Interest, these are your profess'd Gallants, Gamesters, all that devote themselves to Diversions, and especially the Persons that furnish them; all that choice Gang the Poet speaks of:

Ambubajarum Collegia, Pharmacopolæ,

Mendici, Mimæ, Balatrones; hoc genus omne.

The Readers of Romances and Novels, Stories, Collections of Poems, Mercures Gallants, and other Works of the Time, which are peculiar to the *French*, can't fail of having a high Opinion of them. I believe the *French* please them every where, and that the young People, every where, are pleas'd with *French* Ways, and the Idea they have of the Manner of Living in this Country; 'tis this that makes their Party considerable, the Years of Discretion are not so favourable to them: The *French* Sprightliness begins to lag the other Side of thirty, and the cool Blood of People come to Maturity, is scarce compatible with it. All free Nations, or those that value Liberty, don't look upon the *French* as Models, and are far from admiring them. The People call'd Philosophers, that is, those that see with their own Eyes, and have just Sentiments of Things, laugh at them. Those that have any Thing of the *Misanthrope* hate them: Such as love

a plain and quiet Life, the old-fashion'd People, that will not change their Way of Living, nor employ their Time in visiting, and preserve their Houses from the Manners of the Time, which they call pernicious and extravagant, and some other particular People have an ill Will towards them. They have Reason likewise to fear such as are clownish, that call every Thing by its proper Name, and give hard Names to many Things they mention in *France* with Applause. But the *French* are still in less Esteem among People that know them only in other Countries, and by Persons whom Chance rather than Choice has made them acquainted with; these are preposess'd against the Nation, and a more favourable Chance, or their Friends that have been in *France*, must set them right.

On this Occasion, I must acquaint you with a Singularity of the *French*, which has been taken Notice of long since, but we have not been yet undeceiv'd about it; that is, that 'tis better to know the *French* in *France* than Abroad; which is quite contrary to other People, who are thought to be more sociable and complaisant in foreign Countries than at Home. And in effect, a *Frenchman* in his own Country is seldom displeas'd at a Foreigner's not being thoroughly versed in *French* Ways, he is satisfy'd with their Endeavours, and being in Expectation of their improving, he keeps them in Heart: For 'tis an Article in their *Art of Living*, not to discourage those that come among them, and do Homage to the *French* Character. But as soon as a *Frenchman* comes into another Country, being surpriz'd to see all the People differ from him, he can't contain himself any longer, and flies from the Sight of so many dreadful Things.

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Behaviour and the *Art of Living* being a Kind of Religion with him, he is possess'd with Zeal to make Profelytes, and undertakes to convert a whole City, rather than conform in the least on his Part. When he is at any Court, he takes it ill that they should pretend to any Politeness with such strange Ways; he views them on all Sides, makes the Model for People every where with so much the more Willingness, because he finds People every where ready to frame themselves by him. To see him alone, and hear him talk of the *French Way of Living*, a Man is apt to have a great Opinion of *France*; but as soon as he has any Opportunity of meeting other *Frenchmen*, and that the Question is really about forming this agreeable Society, there's no more room for this great Opinion, and these People that are so sociable in their own Country, cease to be so in others: There most of them prefer the Acquaintance of Strangers to that of their Countrymen, and the least Matter of Interest sets them at Variance. 'Tis then they injure and disgrace themselves among those they converse with, and they do it so much to the purpose, that they give as bad an Opinion of their Nation, as they gave a good one, by what they related before to its Advantage. So that one may conclude from all this, that the *French* ought to stay in *France*, where their Manners and Ways are in their proper Place; and that there are *Frenchmen* enough in the World, for the Variety of the Character which it ought to have in it; but to magnify this Character, by limiting it as we do, and making it answer the Intentions of the *French*, ill answers that of Nature, and demonstrates that we are but little acquainted with the good she

has done us, and is just as if we made Parterres and Walks of the Meadows and Fields she has given us.

You'll say 'tis not very polite to write three long Letters about *Paris* and the *French* Nation, and to say no more of the Women. I must speak of them more at large, and in such a Manner as may, perhaps, make you think me still less polite. I have had no Occasion for particular Enquiries to inform myself of their Character and Manners; common Fame, which does not vary with respect to them, and agrees entirely with what is related by the profess'd Gallants, makes them sufficiently known to every one that is not curious to know them by Experience. The *French* Women are not over handsome, which the *French* themselves allow to be true: As to their agreeable Ways, in which they must surpass the Women of other Countries, I don't know whether they would affect you much, and whether you would not think them too forward. The essential Qualities of the fair Sex, Bashfulness, Modesty and Chastity, are, no doubt, the Things that make them agreeable, as well as Merit, I don't say in the Eyes of a Philosopher, or a Man of the old Times, but in those of every Man, that is in a proper State of judging of them. The Manners now in vogue have insensibly taken away that Kind of Taste from the *French*; what makes a Woman amiable in their Eyes, is Sprightliness and Wit, which is a perpetual Subject of Ridicule for the Nation. The Women of Quality, especially, disdain this Bashfulness and scrupulous Shame-facedness. They seem to them to be mean and affected, only fit for Tradesmen's Wives, and to shun this extrem,

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they shun Modesty. They look upon it as a Thing that regards the others, (for whom they will not have any Respect) rather than themselves, or their own Character, and so give Way to Liberties that are not suitable to them. You would be of Opinion they abandon their Character in a great many Things: They are so much given to intriguing, that they even meddle with Politicks, and all Kind of Business is done thro' their Means. They likewise abandon their Character in Intrigues of another Sort, to which they are naturally more inclinable; 'tis not to Tenderness they give Way, which might claim some Indulgence for this weak and tender Sex, that are expos'd by reason of the Manners of the Country to the Designs of the Men who are experienced in the Trade; they are overcome by Expences and Noise. Noise in any Sense does not discourage them: As the Men are intrepid in War, so the Women are in Love; they look Danger in the Face, and notwithstanding all the Examples of Indiscretion they have before their Eyes, and all the idle Stories that are made, yet great Numbers of them run the same risque, and favour the People that are proud of their good Graces. Some do it in Verse, and the Poems made on those Subjects, are call'd *Enjoyments*, and are put without any Disguise among the Sonnets and Madrigalls in their Collections of Poetry, as the Women of Gallantry are among those that have a good Reputation. In Company the Women speak loud, and take upon them to decide Matters; you don't see them in any Disorder, their Behaviour is not easy and natural, and they have nothing like an Air of Innocence. Every Thing they say and do, has a Turn of Rote in it, which does not become Women

Women, in my Opinion; and, I believe, you'll agree with me, that their Wit ought to be hid almost as much as their Bodies; and that they should let us have no more than a Glimpse of it. But here they are from any such Management; the Women shew both their Bodies and their Wit. They forget that they lavish away their Charms by shewing them always, and that the Men should put the Women in mind of them. As they are accusom'd to obliging Things, and it being a Rule to speak to them after that Manner, it becomes very easy to them; but you are not much touched with it, you think that Softness was not design'd for them; others have said it already, or it has been said already to others, is rather a Phrase than Argument. In short, as the Men in *France* give too much Way to Trifles, which makes them scarcely Men, the Women have too much Boldness, and are scarcely Women. The continual Commerce between both Sexes causes, as it were, an Exchange of Characters, which makes each Sex derogate something from its proper Character; but the Women (whose tender Character suffers less than is observ'd,) fall into a Mistake, and excel in a great many Things that are out of their Province. They sing Airs that are too licentious, and they sing them well. They drink hard at Table, and they do it agreeably. They understand Gaming as well as the Men. They go a Hunting with them, and come so near the Men in every Thing, that they are scarcely Women. I speak of the Sex in general, and, no doubt, the Ill I say of it, falls short of the Good which might be said of great Numbers that have preserv'd their native Charms by means of a good Education, and have added every Thing that can

can adorn their Sex; Women with those Advantages are what a Man of Merit is among his own Sex; that is, they are amiable above all the Women in the World.

The Maidens deserve a distinct Article which shall be very short. 'Tis a Rule in *France*, that they should not make themselves be spoke of; those that act otherwise are taken Notice of, and can scarce repair the loss. Their Mothers have a watchful Eye over them, and deny them the Liberty of seeing Men in private. But their own Manner of seeing the Men gives the Daughters a bad Example, and 'tis to be fear'd the Example, at long run, has its Effect.

I am now come back again to the *French* in general, and must add a Word about the *English*, who are the Subject of the first Letters I writ to you. The *French*, like all other Nations, have Merit in their general Character, and are, perhaps, of all Nations the most human; they deserve to be lov'd; but in their Uniformity they dare not trust to proper or particular Characters, and, generally speaking, they have no other than that of the Nation. We owe less to the *English* that love us less; but, in other Respects, they deserve Men's Attention and Esteem; and tho' the general Character of their Nation were but of little value, which none should venture to maintain, the *English* would still be considerable by their Number of particular Characters and Originals. They have likewise a Right to our esteem, by giving us an Example of People that dare make use of their Reason, and know how to live independantly, in which they discover more of the Duties of Men, and more Freedom than by the Liberty which they have preserv'd, with Regard to their mild Government.

vernment. The *French*, on the other hand, tho' in their Dependance on Custom, which, do doubt, is an unworthy one, and much more than that they are reproach'd with, in Respect to their despotick Government, have the sociable Virtues; they know how to live among themselves, and with Men in general. The *Englishman* has Courage to take Resolutions on great Occasions, where the Happiness or Unhappiness of Life are at Stake, and nothing affects him more than the Disgrace of failing in his Designs. Besides, he has little Dependance on Opinion, and in Conversation he has more Satisfaction in speaking the Truth, than in saying obliging Things, to make himself agreeable. The *Frenchman* esteems People's Opinion at a high Rate, and endeavours to make them think well of him, as well as to make others pleas'd with themselves; from thence proceed the many soft and flattering Things they speak in Company. His great Concern is about the Disgrace which accompanies Ridicule and Singularity, because he may be expos'd by them, and in lieu of making strong Resolutions, and cutting Difficulties short, which must otherwise happen, he employs his Cunning for a Remedy. He is never at a loss on any Emergency, and behaves himself dexterously in Case of unexpected Accidents, which are frequent in Life, and require Presence of Mind, and is gallant enough to help even others out of Danger. The Way of Living of the *English* supposes more eminent Qualities, and the *French*, in theirs, must have them in greater Numbers. The *English* not only value their Nation at a high Rate, and prefer it to all others, but they have likewise an Esteem for every Individual in it: 'Tis a Nation where
People

People are vain on their own Accounts; and the *English* make the *English* Nation. The *French*, on the other hand, prefer themselves to other Men, chiefly because they are *French*; so that they must have more Vivacity, more Wit than these *English* or *Germans*: Thus the *French* Nation makes the *French*. The *English* by their Contempt of others, the *French* especially, look upon them thro' the Sides, that, in truth, make them contemptible; such as idle Projects, Indifferency about Liberty, their too great Passion for Trifles, in a Word, the little Merit they observe in most Strangers. If Men were allow'd to despise one another, we could not have much Reason to reproach the *English* on this Account. Thus they don't conceal their Contempt of us, and they dare make us sensible of it; but they behave themselves otherwise to Strangers that have any Merit. When the *French* despise other People, the Things they have in view are no Way capable of making them contemptible; their different Ways, little Wit or Knowledge in the Art of Living, or a cool Temper, which they take for a mean Understanding. In a Word, the *French* despise human Race, because they are not all *French*. They conceal their Contempt for us, or at least they think so, and they have Reason on their Side in that Respect; but this hidden Contempt is the more durable, and it rarely forsakes them. To this they add the Desire of setting right the rest of the World, and ruling them: They look upon themselves as the civiliz'd People, that are already above others, by their Wit and Behaviour, and want nothing but to be superiour to them in Power. This Ambition is, perhaps, the worst Part of the *French* Character, and one of the Things that distinguishes them

them from the *English*, who are content with thinking their own Way of Living the best, and allow the rest of the World may govern themselves as they think fit. As to other Things the *French* neither deserve the Hatred of such Numbers of People, the *English* especially, nor to be admired as they are: In my Opinion, the Influence they ought to have on those that know them, is to love them and laugh at them a little. The ill that may be said of them takes up a great deal of room; but it generally extends no further than to small Matters. 'Tis a List of Trifles they set too high a value upon, by which they make themselves little. The Good is sooner said, but it relates to essential Qualities that influence all Parts of Life, and whereby we benefit on a hundred Occasions. The Ill that may be said of the *English*, as well as the Good, is more considerable, and does not lean so much on Ridicule, as it does on the Bad; 'tis more astonishing than diverting; but 'tis not so general as the Ill that may be said of the *French*, which brings Things to an Equality. I think, I would rather be a deserving *Englishman*, than a deserving *Frenchman*; I would likewise rather meet a *Frenchman* of Merit, than an *English*; as there would be more Pleasure in finding a Treasure of Gold Coins, which might be made use of immediately, than to find one of Ingots, which must be first turned into Specie. On the whole, to give in a few Words, and by a sensible Comparison, a just Idea of what may be blameable in the Character of these two Nations; one may say, that in one, the high Road is cover'd with Dirt, that the Crowd walk in it and are bedagled, as are even most of those that go another

ther Way, as it happens in a dirty Country, where 'tis no Dishonour to be dirtied; that in the other Nation the high Road is more beaten, and full of Dust, which spreads over the whole Country, and penetrates every Thing; that its Inhabitants are cover'd with it, and made uniform; that few People dare go into the By-ways to shake off the Dust, because 'tis highly esteem'd in the Country, and that they make a great Shew of it. One of these Nations reproaches the other with her Dirt, and values herself on being less dirty. The other prefers her Dirt to the Dust; she takes a particular Pleasure in shunning it at that Rate, and disdains these dusty Folks. That is, that the great Opinion which Nations have of themselves, and the Contempt they have of one another, redoubles the Ridicule of Self-love among the private People, and it will be found in the End, that 'tis an Advantage to be born in a Nation that has no Reason to boast so much of the Name it bears.

I embrace you, SIR, &c.



LETTER



L E T T E R V.



Believe, Sir, I have told you every Thing I had to say of the *French*; however, I am come to them again. I have said little or nothing of their Wit, which is one of the most important Things in their Character; the Subject, in my Opinion, deserves to be handled more at large.

'Tis difficult to tell what Wit is; nothing varies more, and Men don't agree about it, otherwise than in this, that the different Things which they take for Wit, are most commonly of little value; some make it consist in the Facility of speaking and expressing one's self handsomely; others in the Art of telling a Story to Advantage. This Man places it in Buffonry and Jestings; that there in Points of Wit and Equivocation. Some think it must be in Raillery and Slander. Most People are positive 'tis to be found in florid Discourses, and wherever there's much Fancy or Invention. They give it as many different Shapes as a (k) Spirit is capable of assuming, to understand the Word in its proper Sense, and, I believe, 'tis from thence it takes its Name. It may be said likewise, in order to make the Etymology compleat, that as People often think 'tis where 'tis not,

(k) In French *Esprit* signifies Ghost as well as Wit,

not, so on the other hand they often over-look it, where it really is, or at least most of them do so. Tho' there may be such a Thing as Wit, and it differ'd much from what I have said, if 'tis of value, as it certainly is, 'tis not, however, that which is commonly set upon it, or at least its Use is not so general as is imagin'd. The *French* look on it as an essential Thing, as one of the Qualities whereby a Gentleman ought to set himself forward, and in my Opinion, 'tis so far from it, that every Gentleman may be very well without it; I don't say as to himself, where 'tis easy to comprehend 'tis not of any great Use, but even with Regard to others, and in Society, where it ought to be in its proper Place. Wit is an Ornament to Man, and can't be acquired; Nature gives it to us, and by that, as well as the small Number of People she bestows it upon, she demonstrates that we don't want it.

That which puts Men in a State of conversing together, and is proper for all Times, and all Countries, is good Sense, which is a Quality essential to Man. We may, perhaps, look upon it as the Vista of the Soul, which is given him to know the Truth, the essential Part of Things, and to benefit by them. For it appears that 'tis partly for that End that Man was made and sent into the World, where so many Things offer themselves to him; and good Sense ought to be, in my Opinion, that which should conduct and enable him to fulfil the Design of his Creation in this Respect. This good Sense has its proper Language, and this Language is sufficient for us. If our Eyes are good, Objects will not be wanting, and there will be enough to please ourselves with.

For among Men, those that see clearly, and refer what they see to an End worthy of Man, are possess'd of this good Sense, and have from that Time, in my Opinion, all that the Nature of Man requires, as he is a reasonable Creature. Those that choose rather to devote themselves to the discerning the particular Ways whereby all Things are varied and embellished, and please themselves in varying and embellishing their Discourses, may well be the People of Wit. In that Case, Wit would be nothing else than good Sense refin'd; and it would be allow'd to be a great Ornament to the Man that had a share of it, and likewise that it should concur to the same End with the good Sense, of which 'tis a Part; that it must benefit by every Thing, lead us to Good, by representing it in a more lively or more agreeable Manner, and induce us to avoid Evil, by making it frightful and odious in our Eyes. Thus Wit might add something to good Sense, and strengthen it by embellishing it; it would have that Effect, at least, with Regard to People that are affected with Splendour, and give way to it. But Wit, generally speaking, except it be well managed, or in such a Manner as not to be taken notice of, has this Inconveniency, that it influences more with Regard to itself, in order to raise Admiration, than in recommending Truth by making it agreeable, and 'tis always true that good Sense alone, without any Ornament, when 'tis properly enforced, and sets off Truth to Advantage, is much preferable to Wit.

If you desire to be more exactly informed in the Point of Distinction between good Sense and Wit, and would have me Reason upon it with more Seriousness, you shall have my Thoughts

Thoughts on that Topick. I imagine two Faculties in Man's Understanding that answer to the Good and the Beautiful, the two Perfections of the Objects he has before him. That which corresponds with the Good, and shall have the first Rank in our new System, shall be that which knows and discovers the essential Part of Things. It will be proper for it to have a Body, (if one may speak after that Manner,) and Depth, and shall contain more Truth than it seems to do: This is it that I'll call good Sense. I represent it to myself as the Male Faculty of the Soul, (if I may use that Term,) and is in my Opinion, chiefly proper for Men. The Beautiful shall be what accompanies the Good, and embellishes it; it shall have something more of Shew, and make us take Notice of Relations that are agreeable on Account of their Delicacy, as well as their Exactness. This shall be the Female Faculty of the Soul, as it may, perhaps, be that which should come to the Women's Share. Good Sense and Wit shall have Truth equally for a Foundation, and must not subsist without it; and as good Sense, tho' without Ornament, is still beautiful, so likewise Wit shall not deserve the Name if it has not the Good, and the Solid with the Beautiful. Every Work where the Beautiful is predominant, shall be a Work of Wit, and that where the Good rules, shall be a Work of good Sense. When both the Good and the Beautiful are found together, and concur to the same End, and that Wit does not make itself remarkable, being only an Appendix to good Sense, but still has its Effect, as being embodied with it, we will acknowledge this Mixture to have something in it very agreeable, and esteem at a high rate

the Works that have it. But we will still have a greater value for those where the Good excels, and dispense with all Embellishment; such are beautiful in themselves, and far superiour to those that have any Mixture. 'Tis principally in these Works of the first Rank, which are very few, that we meet with the Sublime, which few attain to, and whereof we scarce dare venture to determine the Idea. Should it not consist in setting off to the greatest Advantage a Truth that has Grandeur in it, in bringing it back to its Simplicity and Unity, by the Manner of conceiving and expressing it; would not Wit, at that rate, have its Sublime likewise, and would not that be the Natural of some particular Kind, I mean when it has as much good Sense as Delicacy? That is the Purity of Wit, and we must always come back to the Purity, as being that which is the essential Part of the Sublime, of whatever Kind it is. 'Tis very rare to find the Natural in Works of Wit; and People of Taste are not only more charm'd with it than the most sparkling Thoughts; but even when 'tis such as we suppose, it has still this Character of the Sublime, that the Original is unknown. It does not depend on us to form it and enrich our Works with it; it seems to be born of itself, and it offers itself to the Wit, as belonging to it, and almost as if Wit had no Share in it. We must acknowledge to the Honour of the *French*, that they know it better than others. Let us return to their Wit, and to those among them that shine most with it, and see how far we ought to value it. Here again you must endure a great deal of Reasoning more than you expected, or I intended.

That

That the Good, in all Sorts of Writings, may subsist without the Beautiful, at least without that which the Imagination, or the Vivacity of Wit can add, is very certain; and the excellent Productions which we have in this Kind are Proofs of it. 'Tis now a Question, if the Beautiful can also subsist without the Good, or the Agreeable without the Profitable; we must come back to this Question, and consider of the Value to be put on Works of this Kind: Those of *Voiture* and *Sarasin*, for Example, who were, I believe, the first of the Wits of their Days, when Wit seems to have had its Period. I don't at all hesitate about this Question, and what I have said already, I say again: In the Productions of Wit, the Beautiful cannot be separate from the Good, as in Nature the Beauty of Man can't be separate from Health, which causes it; without the Good there can be no true Beauty: For Man being made for the Good, he cannot be without it, except he ceases to be what he is; and it being the Nature of Good to communicate itself to every Thing susceptible of it, he cannot avoid introducing it into all the Productions of his Wit. Man then shou'd incline to Good, as his End, and turn all his good Sense, and likewise all his Wit to that Side, if he would make any use of it, since Wit ought not to be separate from good Sense, and that in the End, nothing but the Good deserves to be adorned with the Beautiful. 'Tis obvious enough from thence, that the true Productions of Wit are not of the Nature of those of *Voiture* and *Sarasin*, that have nothing but the Beautiful, or something to please, nor any other End but to cause some agreeable Surprise. *Voiture* and *Sarasin* were profess'd Wits, that adorned

the Beautiful, which they made their chief Aim, with the Good which they might have; but they had it not in such abundance as to make it run over in the Productions of Wit; that is, that *Voiture* and *Sarasin* could not fail of doing what they did, they could not avoid changing the Order which makes the Beauty of the Objects of Wit, and dazzle Men with Shew. They were not thoroughly acquainted with the true Value of the Good, so as to improve it, and consequently their Works, not squaring with the Condition of Man founded on the Good, cannot be so valuable as People imagine. At the hazard of advancing a great Paradox, I say the Price of Productions of Wit, and generally of all those where there's room for the Good, depends chiefly on the Value of the Author, or the Good that is in him; that his Character influences the whole, and gives it its Dignity, more than all the Wit of those Compositions, and that it belongs therefore to Men who have a great deal of the Good to form the Beautiful and adorn themselves with it, to sport with Productions of Wit, and make others Sport, none but those can do it nobly. Let us consider the Thing another Way; 'tis an Affair of Importance, and 'tis it that leads us to a true Knowledge of the Value of Compositions of Wit.

In my Opinion, all Writings that are rational and solid, tend to discover the different Relations which Things may have, whether among themselves, to form a well proportion'd Whole, or to Man that is placed in their Center, and must probably have some Advantage by it. The Discovery of the Relations, of things among themselves, requires nothing but Attention and
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Judgment, and the greatest Part of those that love to make use of their Reason, turn it that Way. We see infinite Numbers of these Productions, and those of Wit that have any Reality, are commonly of this Kind. The Discovery of the Relations which Things have to Man, requires, besides the Soundness of Reason, Soundness of Heart, and Inclination for Order. For, to be sensible of these Relations, Man must be in Order himself, and be such that all Things may refer to him as their chief Aim. Every good Man is attentive to that which surrounds him, and turns to this sort of Discovery, to which he makes the other subordinate; for he apprehends the Relations which Things have among themselves don't concern him no further than as they relate to him, and he conducts himself by what concerns him. If a Man of this Character goes to write, his Works must be extraordinary; the Profitable is there mixed with the Agreeable, or rather, the Agreeable is introduced to improve the Profitable and the True, which flows from him more naturally than the Agreeable. The Wits we have mentioned, *Voiture* and *Sarasin*, were not in that State, they gave no Attention to these Relations; and the Agreeable, instead of embellishing their Productions, becomes the essential Part of them: Being Men of a lively and fruitful Invention, and having Leisure enough besides, they undertook to invent Relations, whether among Things themselves, or between Things, and the idle Man with Regard to Good, which ought to be his Occupation; and they have embellish'd these Relations with every Thing the Fertility of Wit could afford. Such Novelties must please the Men they were in-

vented for, since they confirm them in their Idleness, and there's no room to be astonish'd, if, by their Ignorance of the true Relations which Regard the Man that is active and bent upon Good, they admire these Productions, and look upon them as the Master-pieces of human Wit. Neither is there any room to be surpriz'd if those that own these invented Relations to be of no Value, should take Occasion from thence to despise the Productions of Wit, of whatever Nature they may be, and deny that Works of Wit are of any Advantage to the World.

Let us not be so severe, and agree there's some sporting in Men's Discourses, since Nature gives them Wit and forms them with an Inclination to sporting; but let us ask them what are its Dignity and Use, as the Diversions that regard the Body have theirs, and help to make it vigorous and active. A Man of Sense does not divert himself either with Dancing on the Ropes, or Juggling, but he makes choice of genteel Exercises, and none blames him on that Account: Let us do the same Thing with Respect to Men of Understanding; let us have noble Diversions that are proper for us, and by recreating us give us Encouragement to return to our Work. That the Aim of Works of Wit should be the Good made agreeable; that they should instruct us by their sporting, and even without discovering any Design of instructing, if People would have it so. That those Men who have a Talent for Drollery may practice it if they please, they ought to do it as Men that play with Children, to whom they give sound Ideas of every Thing they speak to them about, and not as Children that play the Fool with other Children. That every Man of Wit
set

set the Price which Things have with Relation to Man. For every Thing being made in order to lay before his Eyes certain Truths, which in the main regard the Value of Things, every Thing referring to them one Way or another, every Production of a Man of Genius must have this Mark of Reality to contain these Relations and this Value, and make them known to those that are ignorant of them. That is proper for a Man of Sense, as well in his Sports as in his serious Concerns, and 'tis it that gives them Dignity. Every Thing must likewise be handled in Proportion to its Value, and by that also, the Price of every Thing in these Productions, being mark'd as it were, they may be of use to that Kind of Knowledge, that of all others is the most profitable, and to which all others must refer. At that rate every Thing in Nature may be a Subject of Discourse for Men, and there may be room for Wit every where, in small Things as much, and, perhaps, more than in great, for they have the same Original, and all of them deserve our Attention, since Nature lays them all before our Eyes. Good Sense without any Ornament is best pleased with Things of Importance, leaving Wit to sport herself with little Things, and Wit, on her Part, accommodates herself to this Partition and naturally inclines to the Little, as being fittest to play with. Let us play then with all that is trifling and little in the World, and put a hundred and a hundred Things to that use, in Expectation of finding another for them, and that Wit should find its own, if it be not that of Sporting. Let us return to the Works of *Voiture* and *Sarasin*.

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The *French* value them at a high Rate, and they are Things of Importance in their Eyes. *Voiture* imposes on them more than any other; they put him (as it were) at the Head of their Wits, and (1) one of the Number calls him their King. *Sarasin* has likewise his Admirers that extol him to the Skies, and have as much Reason to do so as those of *Voiture*, if it be true that these Authors Kind of Writing is what People would improve. It must be acknowledged both of them excel in it: *Voiture* in his Letters, and *Sarasin* in some of his Poems, where, in my Opinion, he has the Advantage of the other. Never did People play the Child more agreeably than these Writers have done; never was there a more fruitful Imagination than theirs; the Flowers grow under their Hands, as they do under their Shepherds Feet; and they spread them on every Thing they touch; never was Work more marvellous in its Kind, and likewise never was any Kind of Writing more fantastical. To these two Authors I'll add *Balsac*, no less esteem'd than they, and is the same in the grave and lofty Stile, that the others are in the familiar and gay, and I say they are Frolicks of Nature; that she was willing to try how far the irregular Imagination of Men can be agreeable and sublime; what kind of Things this Imagination would bring forth of itself, and the Time when she should have good Sense at her Service, instead of being at the Service of good Sense. Had not I said already that the Good, or the Rational ought to be the essential Part of Men's Writings, I would say it in this Place, and insist that the Rational

(1) Pellisson in his *Discourse on Sarasin's Works*.

nal may be said to be, as it were, the Body of every Work. If an Author pleases himself with embellishing and making it agreeable, let him do so, then he may employ his Wit and adorn this Body. But Wit or Invention without a good Foundation, is like a Shadow cloath'd, or a Phantom; or, if I must make a Comparison not to frightful, I say then 'tis with Wit as with Sugar, it sweetens some particular Meats that would not be so grateful without it, and gives them a better Relish; it serves for Comfits, that People eat with Pleasure, but of itself is not good. The Works of *Voiture* and *Sarasin*, especially *Voiture's*, are not Comfits, they are Sugar disguis'd after different Ways; they are sugar'd Paste made into Figures, we see them for a Minute, and are pleas'd with them; but must be Children to eat much, or make a Meal of them.

We must make another Remark on *Voiture's* Works, it relates particularly to his Letters, which are most esteem'd, and which People would chiefly imitate. We write Letters to our Friends to let them know how Things are with us, and especially if they any Way relate to them, and we write every Thing we could say in case we happen'd to meet them. The Perfection of these Sorts of Letters consists then in their resembling common Discourse; that they be familiar and natural, and that they be not only free from the Umbrage of the Composition, but that they surpass it, and that the Language of the Heart be felt in them. This is far from the Character of *Voiture's* Letters, instead of being natural, they are only witty, and imitate that Kind of Friendship that will not be imitated, they jest with it: This Writer
feigns

feigns to feel what he does not feel, and aggravates it to make himself valuable, and seem to be much affected. This is a Jest with which the Persons that receive such Letters have no great Reason, in the main, to be pleas'd; for 'tis unhappy that our Friends, when they write to us, are oblig'd to have recourse to Fiction, and that in every Letter we receive from them we find we are not yet advanced so far as to inspire them with any Regard for us. Nor have the Persons to whom *Voiture* writes, any Reason to be pleas'd with his Flattery, and extolling every one of them in their Turn above the rest. These Letters, in every Shape, have an Effect contrary to what they ought to have; they shew us *Voiture* as he is a Wit, but not *Voiture* as a Friend, and it seems that in him the Writer has devour'd the Man. In truth, all Professions in which Men engage, are subject to this Inconveniency, and they rarely excel in any but at the Expence of the Foundation, which is Humanity. But that ought to have a particular exception, with Regard to Wit, which should be the Ornament of Humanity, as the Flowers we see in the Meadows serve to adorn them, without lessening any Thing of their Value. This Author ought to employ himself upon other Subjects, on Subjects of Drollery, and such as Man should be no Way interested in, for whom he has no Concern. Some of his Writings are of this Kind, and 'tis in them we must acknowledge his great Genius, and there place the Royalty to which they have rais'd him. *Voiture* is the King of Drollery and Trifles, and on the same Foot, shall be King of the Wits (if they desire it,) of a Country where Trifles are esteem'd, and his Encomium shall be

be exactly the same that *Sarasin* has given him, and by changing the Name might be given to *Sarasin* himself.

Veturius, nulli nugarum laude secundus. Let us proceed with examining their best Wits, of whom the *French* boast so much, and endeavour to find out the Price which ought to be set upon them.

They have famous Poets in the Drama, that is, in the best Productions of the Understanding. *Corneille* and *Racine* excell'd in Tragedy, and *Moliere* in Comedy. Let us endeavour to set a Price, not on these Poets, but on this Kind of Writing, where there's no more wanting to excel than to be reckon'd among the great Genius's, and in effect it requires more than an ordinary Capacity. Here the Relations extend to Man; but the End of the Drama being no more than to please us, these Relations cannot have all their Exactness, and, in general, the Poet can't avoid doing them Violence in order to accommodate them to the Taste of the Publick. In Comedy he lessens them, and puts them below Man, and in Tragedy he extends them to make them Heroick, and sets them above him. These Compositions, as well as most others, have no other Aim but Applause, and the whole, at last, tends to applaud the Poet. We will then applaud those we have named, and say once more that they have excell'd in this Kind of Writing, and have, perhaps, carried it further than any that went before them. But we will not allow their Works to be as important as they are ingenious, and the Beautiful of the Drama shall no more impose on us to make us value it, than it does on the Publick, on whom it has no other Effect than

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to please and amuse. But now, Sir, to tell you what I think of this Affair, the writing of Tragedies, which they extol so much above that of Comedies, and which in Reality infinitely surpasses it, for the Excellence of the Subject, seems to me to be not only of little use, but less proper for the Stage, which has more of the comick Part, in one Sense, than Comedy itself. The Stage is not made to give Men what they have not, sublime Thoughts, which are the subject of Tragedy; 'tis not proper, at the most, to take away what they have too much of, the Follies that make them ridiculous: Comedy, by setting them in a clear Light, may give People a dislike to them; on that Account the Stage is its proper Place, and likewise because 'tis proportion'd to Man's Wit that loves Mirth, and readily tends to Trifles. Every Thing that is vain and frothy is fit to be represented on the Stage, and Comedy being the World in Epitome, Men that see it acted, value it sufficiently by laughing at it. Were it rectified and clear'd of every Thing but Farce, and applied as much to Correction as it is to Amusement, it might, at last, have its use, and be a Sport for People. But 'tis not so with Tragedy, it exposes serious and grave Subjects on the Stage, and plays with Things from which we might draw quite another Advantage. It turns the Good into the Beautiful, after its Way, by making it serve for Representations and Paintings, about which there's no other Question but to know if they are well made: It exposes and abases Virtue in some Respect, even by recommending it: We are not ignorant of the Price of Virtue, and we know very well it must be of use in the World. The Question

is to know where to place it, and how Men are made, if any one can shew it to them as at a Distance, and out of the common Path of Life; if at any Rate he can give them a Dispensation from practising it themselves, he pleases them. The Poets do them this Service by the help of Tragedies; there they set off Virtue with Splendour, but in so extraordinary a Sphere, and so distant from what is common and familiar, and they are so well acquainted with the Art of turning it into fine Words and lofty Sentiments, that they make a Kind of Proportion between the Play and Virtue. The Audience seeing it become a Thesis, the splendid Play-thing of Wit, accustom themselves to look upon it as if it were made for that Purpose, and think that a Thing represented with so much Lustre has all it can expect from human Wit. By approving and admiring these Compositions, and giving Way to all the Emotions which they produce, they are of Opinion they have answer'd every Thing they can require of them, with Regard to the Heart. Thus Virtue becomes a Shew exhibited to the Curiosity of the People, an Object for the Stage, whither Men banish her, and all these lofty Sentiments appear to them to be as far distant from common Life, as the Apparel and Attitudes of the Stage are from those they wear at home. Love alone which, generally speaking, is the essential Part of these Representations, and in which all the Performances of the Stage center and assist each other, Love which is most suitable to the Inclinations of Youth, has its Effect in these Plays which were invented for them, and communicates itself in good earnest. On this Account, especially, it may be said

said that Tragedy is mischievous. It abases the Good by mixing it with the Bad, with Love, as it authorizes the Bad in making it go Hand in Hand with the Good. We shall therefore have Reason to look upon the greatest Efforts of the Understanding for writing Tragedies among Things that are vain and ill-proportion'd, and those for writing Comedies among such as may be useful, were they as compleat as the Wit of Man, conducted by good Sense, might make them; but as they are, they rather corrupt than do good.

The *French* have multiply'd and entirely abas'd Comedies, by a Kind of Writing which is altogether uncommon, that is Burlesque, to be found no where, I believe, but among them, and we must not forget to put the Poet, to whom they are obliged to for it, in the List of their Wits. *Scaron*, a celebrated Author of this Age, has excell'd in this Way of Writing, and perfected it. Here all the Relations extend not only to the idle, but likewise to the extravagant Man, and this Wit deserves to be acknowledged King of Extravagance, as well as *Voiture* King of Wantonness; the Number of his Admirers shews likewise that his Kingdom is as considerable. As to other Matters, it would seem as if Nature and this famous Wit had made War on one another reciprocally: Nature lodged it very ill, and in a deform'd Body, and it on the other hand, as if it were to revenge itself, disfigures *Virgil* who is the Poet that is an Honour to Nature; and he disguises *Virgil* as Nature disguised himself. This Work of Ridicule deserv'd to be esteem'd as much as it is, that Men might see how far we are capable of becoming the Bubbles of the Imagination, when

we depart from good Sense and Simplicity, and to what a Degree our Taste is corrupted, when we think of cultivating it by any Thing else but Truth, which is agreeable to Man.

Another Author that appear'd on the Stage in the last Century, had already sported himself with this deprav'd Taste, in his *Pantagruel*, where by the Help of some fine Passages, which he seems to have thrust into them here and there, as it were to allure the Reader, he makes him run over whole Pages, not only of Stuff, to which the Vulgar suffer themselves to be easily led, but even of senseless and mad Whimsies; that is, his Jest is accompany'd with Things that match them exactly; and he presents to those that run after this Kind of Wit, what their Taste deserves. Here we must not look for Relations; for the Pleasure of this Wit was to destroy them, and to publish a Work where there were none, a Work inferior to Man's Condition, and which, by a mysterious Appearance, was thought to be above it. The *French* are, however, very proud of this Author, and they put him in the Rank of their (m) extraordinary Men. But some one has done him more Justice, in deriving the Name of *Rabelais*, from *Rabie Lasus*, that is, *Struck with Madness*; and it may be said, that such Numbers of People as use his Language and Jest, confirm this Etymology, and shew that they were bit, as it were, by some mad Thing or other. There's nothing in that Author, in my Opinion, to recommend Wit, and I believe other People will not much envy the *French* on the Score of these two extraordinary Persons. We might likewise

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(m) *vide Rabelais in Morery's Dictionary.*

bring some other Wits of the Time past on the Stage, and shew by them, that Wit, even when People excel in it in the Eyes of the Publick, has something very ambiguous, and that a Nation, which had an Advantage of others in that Respect, would not have so much Reason to boast as is at first imagin'd. But let us quit the Wits of the Time past, to come to those that make a shining Figure at this Time, or some of them at least.

The first that offers is their celebrated Poet, the Author of the Satyrs, that sweeps the *French Parnassus*, and drives away the Crowd of Wits that have no good Title to it. His Works are not without their Desert, and they justify the Esteem which the Publick has for them in some Measure. They are well turn'd and elegant, and have something in them very awful: There we see Art and Pains join'd to the Talents of Nature, and the Poet has happily introduced the finest Passages in the ancient Poets, and embellished his own Works with them. Here the Relations extend to Man, inasmuch as he is sociable, and preserves himself from Ridicule; and, generally speaking, they are regular and well proportion'd, nor are the Works without Dignity. But the Price which the Poets sets upon Good and Evil, especially the first, seems to proceed rather from the Head than the Heart, answerable to his Satyrs, which affect the Head rather than the Heart. That is another Reason for not putting them into the first Rank, as to their Beauty, which is the Thing that gains them Applause. As to other Things, our Author has no predominant Character: He has good Sense and Wit enough to excel ordinary Genius's; but I can't say he is a great

great Genius. He seems often to employ his good Sense and his Wit separately, and one of them when the other fails, rather than make use of both together, to set off to Advantage the Sentiments of the Heart, which make the Poet. He sometimes raises himself, but his Flights are short, and his Poems favour much of Straining and Pains; one may perceive that the Search of the Beautiful, and a particular Kind of Brightness are their chief Spring; from thence proceed the Jestings which we meet so often in him, as well as all this unnecessary Malice, and the Passages that divert the Reader, but are not to the Honour of the Poet. They make us sensible that the whole is no more than a Jest, that the Poet has no other View than to make himself merry, and to obtain the Approbation of the Publick, and a great Number of People that are pleas'd with this Malice and ill Nature. This likewise gave him an Opportunity of falling upon general Topicks, rather than the Defects of his Nation, and by this, as well as the proper Character of his Wit, he does not benefit the *French* as much as a Satyrick Poet might do. For this Reason chiefly, I look upon him to be as much beneath the Excellent, where he is placed by the Publick, as he is above the Ordinary or Indifferent, which he attacks with Success in his Satyrs; and I am persuaded Time, which sets the just Value on Authors, will not put this in the first Rank, as the Age does. Give me Leave to make one Remark on the *French* Writers on this Poet's Account; generally speaking, they write for the Publick, not to do them good, but to please them, and have their Approbation; they study their Taste, and they will

not venture to write any Thing that may be disagreeable to them. The Publick is their Idol, as Wit is the Publick's; and I believe one may say, without being mistaken, that whatever Genius a Writer may have, this very mean View would be sufficient to stint and hinder it from soaring, as it otherwise would. A Genius truly great has the Publick in his Eye, in order to give them Laws, and not to receive them; 'tis this that produces the Performances that are excellent.

The *French* have a Writer, that better deserves, in my Opinion, the Title of a Wit. He gives an easy and ingenious Turn to whatever he writes in Prose and in Verse, and employs the Natural as well as the Brilliant. He knows Nature, and seldom departs from her in the Works where she ought to be follow'd. Let the Subject he handles be never so dry, he embellishes it with fine Thoughts, and in him is seen, in all its Agreeableness, and, perhaps, in all its Profuseness, the gay and elegant Wit, which is properly the Wit of the *French*. But his Works are defective (as well as a great many others) in that which should be their Excellency; the Good, which the Heart alone, when 'tis replenish'd with it, spreads over them. The Author seems to keep himself neuter between the Good and the Evil which may be done to Men by writing, at least, if it be true, that there's no Harm in entertaining them with Things that flatter the ordinary Taste, to paint in lively Colours and moving Strokes, Love that misleads them, and to make a Jest of several Subjects, which might be turn'd to better Advantage. The Relations are more natural in his Works than in those of *Voiture* and *Sarasin*, and he

he may be put into the same Rank with them as to the Beauty of Wit, if he does not even surpass them; but these Relations are not less extended to the idle Man, that lives only for Pleasure, and the Value of Things is not much better observ'd in them. For that Reason especially, we can't set a very great one on his Works, be they never so well writ, and let them deserve never so many Encomiums in other Respects. If it be true that Wit can't be carry'd further than this Author has done, as some imagine, that put him at the Head of the Moderns, that Work of his which has given room for this Opinion, shall likewise serve for a Proof that Wit, whatever Flights it may take, can't of itself go very far. He raises himself by the help of the Works of good Sense, which others furnish him with, and the Writers of this Character are in the right to take that Method; but we shall likewise be in the right to say, that if they will carry away the Bell from good Sense, if Wit will have itself proclaimed King, he must be reduced to the Stratagem used by the Wren, that hid himself under the Eagle's Wing to be carry'd up to the Skies, and did not take his Flight, to overcome, till the Eagle had finish'd his.

Here we have a Wit of another Character, a famous Author, who after having writ on all Sorts of Subjects, with an extraordinary Facility, and gaining a great deal of Reputation, bethought himself, at last, to drain all his Knowledge, and discharge it into a large Book of Criticism, in order to entertain the Curious. This Author, above any other, demonstrates how far a Man that is defective in the Sentiments of the Heart may go astray thro' Wit;

and his Work, which, by the agreeable Manner 'tis writ, deceives so many People, may shew on what Side the general Taste of our Times is turn'd. The Relations of Things among themselves are well observ'd here; Argument is this Author's Master-piece; but the Relations which Things have to Man are entirely overthrown and destroy'd. They neither reach the idle nor extravagant Man, but the vicious is made more vicious by them. The Author pleased himself with dispersing Obsceneness thro' them, as well as jesting on some Subjects, that every reasonable Person will always respect, and he improves both the one and the other by Wit, that fits every Thing, the Filthy and the Bad, as well as the Good, and diverts himself with shewing the Wonders he can do in the Bad more than the Good. The Body of the Book is a Wonder of itself, for the many idle and impertinent Things which an agreeable Stile, and a natural and ingenious Turn makes us value and admire; 'tis the Work in the World where the Men that run after Wit, those that have a mind to be amused and deceived, are best fitted. This frightful Volume, this Mountain of a Book, after making great Out-cries in a Preface that matches it exactly, and may excuse a Man of Understanding from reading the Work, brings forth nothing more than a Mouse, or rather the Mouse brings forth a whole Brood, that creeps every where to gnaw and spoil, without even sparing the most sacred Things. Shall this Author, who thinks so ill of every Thing we esteem, have Liberty of saying what he thinks, and shall others make it a Decorum not to say what they think of him? Let us speak boldly, and say that the
Author

Author of the Critical Dictionary is a Quack, and, perhaps, the most remarkable of all the Quacks that ever appear'd; being deck'd with a vain-glorious Erudition, a Heap of Facts and Circumstances that never deserv'd to be taken Notice of by a Man of Sense, he makes himself known by a Kind of Pomp, and attracts the Eyes of every one; and the Fertility of his Wit that makes him fit for acting any Part, puts him in a Condition of pleasing a Crowd. Sometimes he acts the Philosopher, that seems to have good Manners in great Esteem, and he makes Reflections that recommend him; at other Times he is a Libertine that sports with every Thing, and humours his Fancy. Sometimes he appears as a Free-Thinker, before whom nothing must stand; at other Times he opposes the Free-Thinkers themselves, and you would be of Opinion he was going to fight them. He is a Scholar that cites or refutes other Scholars; he is a Cavalier that imitates the Language of the Court; sometimes he affects that of War, at other Times that of the Bar. He often makes use of a Language that is only fit to charm the Mob with, and he speaks it so well, that 'tis by it chiefly he carries the Bell from all the Quacks that went before him. There's no Part but he acts, nor any Figure but he assumes, to increase the Crowd of Spectators, as well as to please them; and the Fruit of all that is to make them look upon all Things as if they were made to be jested with. Some content themselves with being bare Spectators of his apish Tricks, and lose no more than their Time. Others, more to be lamented, give Credit to his Discourses, and furnish themselves with his Drugs, as something very extraordinary,

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traordinary, that preserves People from the Scruples and uneasy Terrors of Religion, and they find, in Reality, what they seek after. 'Tis a Work that in every Shape is proper for seducing those that will be seduced.

Here would be Matter in abundance for disparaging that Kind of Wit call'd *Bel Esprit*, should we make it our Business to do so, and to the Authors I have quoted I might add others, which would conclude the Proofs I have already advanced; that Wit, when 'tis not conducted by good Sense, is liable to all Sorts of Errors, and that even with its greatest Efforts, such Things as it produces fall short of the Excellency they seem to have at first View; but 'tis better to consider it in its true Use, when being guided by good Sense, 'tis devoted with it to the Good of Society, by the Heart turned that Way, and filled with good Thoughts. Two Works of this Character have been much taken Notice of in our Days, and *France* furnish'd us with them: Works that are excellent on Account of their Design, which is to instruct, and are embellish'd by the Delicacy of Wit, and agreeable Passages diffused thro' the whole. One of them makes a Kind of Parallel between the Characters of Men in former Times, drawn by one of the most celebrated Writers of Antiquity, and those of the Men in our Generations. He makes at the same Time, by his Manner of Writing, a Parallel between the plain and unaffected Genius of Antiquity, or at least of the Author he has translated, and put at the Head of his Work, and the Genius of our Times, so fertile in Turns of Wit, that are natural to it, and he succeeds in it so far, that the Admirers of Antiquity must be under a Temptation

to declare for the Genius of the Moderns, that is the witty. But the Work is valuable in this Respect, and it may be said to be its Essential; that, generally speaking, the Author seldom suffers the Reader to give any Attention to Wit, which he embellishes. There the Author makes it his chief Business to paint the Manners of his Nation, and seeks after such Means as may enable him to be useful to it, and no doubt but he is so. We observe in his Writings, besides the *French* Genius, which he possesses in its utmost Perfection, all the Penetration that a disinterested Man, or a Stranger, could add to them, and his lively and graceful Painting is undoubtedly as much to be valued for the Instruction they give us, and their Agreeableness, as the most ingenious Satyrs left us by Antiquity, and they far excel those writ in our Times.

The other of these two Performances presents to us in a Poetick Stile, as soft and harmonious, and as rich as the Poetry itself, the Sequel of one of the most celebrated Poems of Antiquity; and this Sequel or Fiction, so disparaged by its being abused in our Days, appears again in its ancient Lustre, is fill'd with important Instructions worthy of the Attention of the Persons for whom it was chiefly writ; that is, those that are appointed to govern, to whom People of Genius owe their Lucubrations preferably to all others. This Work is, perhaps, in our Times, the same Thing that those of the *Greek* Poets were in the Times wherein they appear'd, that is, they excell'd all others. We may say something like it of the Work we join with it, which does not yield to it in any Thing in its Kind; and in each
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of these Performances every Thing refers to Man in the Order and State he ought to be in, and tends to make him return to it. These two Authors are not Wits; they are not of the Number of those that make use of the Good, which they have only in their Heads, to embellish the Beautiful, or that which is intended to please, and which they have in their Hearts. They are Men of Wit that have the Good in their Hearts, and the Beautiful in their Heads. In them Wit does not devour the Man, it only adorns him, and mixes the Beautiful with the Good, which is their chief Aim, as well as the essential Part of their Works. The Character of a good Man that touches us sensibly in every Thing he writes, affects the Reader more than all the Beautiful or the Good in the Work itself, or rather this Character makes the true Beauty, which is the same Thing to Compositions of Wit, that a good Countenance is to some People, it pre-engages us in their Favour, and puts us into the properest Disposition of being easily persuaded.

To these two Performances let us add a third: The agreeable *Fablers* in the witty Poetry of another fine Genius, an Original Genius, and, perhaps, the only one of his Kind. This Work which gives delight even to the most serious Persons, that have but very little Value for any Thing that has no more to recommend it than the Agreeable, shews us what one of those we have just mention'd has already taught us in some Respect; that every Man that has only Wit for his Share, would do well to borrow something of those that have good Sense for theirs, in order to improve his Wit; and that in whatever Manner he possesses it, he ought

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to consecrate it to the Rational, to the Good that deserves to be embellish'd, and by that Method, if its Value is not increas'd, it comes at least into Vogue. Wit, by keeping close to the Good, participates of its Dignity, it raises itself and shines much more than when it makes itself known and adorns itself, which is seldom observed in any Works but such as are of no Value. This Author may likewise shew us what Wit is capable of when it forsakes the Good. He has fully'd his Talent and tarnish'd his Reputation by a Work far different from that we have mentioned: There the Agreeable is employed to give Currency to the Bad and the Foul, and makes some Persons relish them, that would otherwise disdain them. Were it not for the first Work, the second would be less mischievous, and this Conjunction shews us that in order to be a useful Writer to Society, and deserve the Praises due to Men that distinguish themselves, 'tis not enough to have extraordinary Talents, that may be of great use; nor will it suffice to employ them in such a Manner as that Good may result from them; he must have Good in his Eye, and devote his Talents to it; and a Heart full of that in which the Merit of Man consists, must determine his Understanding to one and the same End, the only one that is worthy of him; otherwise a Work may deserve all Sorts of Praises, without the Author's having any Share in them. The extraordinary Regret which the Author we speak of was under, as they say, towards the End of his Days, for the Work which gives occasion to these Reflections, demonstrates that Wit misleads the very Persons that have Virtue and Sincerity; but have no great Value for

for them, because they value Wit too much, by which they acquire a more general, or at least a quicker Reputation.

Shall not we put the Book of Moral Reflections among the celebrated Productions of Wit? If it be true that Wit is good Sense refin'd, this will, no doubt, be a Work of Wit, and even the first in its Kind. But as it is all natural and plain without any brilliant, good Sense may reclaim it and boast of it, and in that Case, it would be a Master-piece of good Sense. 'Tis so without doubt, and it may prove what I said in the Beginning of my Letter: That good Sense, without any Ornament, when it appears in its full Force, has the Advantage of Works where there's a Mixture of Wit; that the Good has its proper Beauty, which is sufficient for it. This Book of Reflections ought to be plac'd among the Works of the first Rank, as well on Account of the Design, as the Manner of executing it. It sets a Value on Things that Men ought to be acquainted with, but are not, on every Thing they do in the whole Course of their Lives; and by a gentle Violence, if I may use the Expression, it forces their pretended Riches from them, their imaginary Virtues with which they are content, and which hinders them from acquiring such as are real. Here likewise every Thing is made relative to Man, who is unmask'd by this Work, and compell'd to know his own corrupt Nature. The false Relations, on which his Corruption is founded, are there overthrown, and by that, Man is excited to search for true Relations, and incline to Religion, which comprehends them all. These Reflections lead him insensibly to see the Necessity of it, and by giving him sound Ideas of
Man's

Man's Condition, they teach him how he shall not be easily mistaken in the Things that ought to correct it. He sees that Religion does not increase these Appearances, nor render Man what he would really seem to be. All the ingenious or rational Productions of Men should be byas'd in some Measure to a like End, as 'tis not impossible but all the Productions of Nature have a secret Tendency the same Way, and are made to lead us to it. Wit, as well as good Sense, is given to Man for his Good, and Man's Good consisting in Religion, Wit and good Sense cannot avoid regarding it, when they are apply'd as they should be. They ought to set us forward, so far, at least, as to shew us the Value of every Thing that offers. But I must not leave this Subject without making some other Remarks that have a Relation to it, and I must say something to you of a particular Sort of Authors, little known in other Nations, but are an Honour to this.

The Women in *France* have observ'd that Wit belong'd to them, as much as to the Men, and have enter'd the Lists with them upon it. There are no less than ten or twelve Writers among them, that have succeeded so well, both in Prose and in Verse, as to carry the Prize from most Men, and to preserve the Rights of their Sex to *Parnassus*; which is as much as to say, that in this Country, the Publick ought not to be surpriz'd at Female Authors, which are dislik'd in the World thro' Prejudice, with Regard to their Capacity. It must be own'd, indeed, that *Parnassus* is not inhabited by Men, but by Maids, and I confess, were I to regulate any Thing in that Country, it would be in Favour of their Sex. 'Tis true, the Character of an Author does
not

not seem to agree with them entirely, and 'tis not without some Reason, that we have hitherto seen but few Women Writers; but since the *Bagatelle* is made the Subject of Books, and even allowing that Women had no Genius for that I speak of, they may, however, become Authors, and present the Publick with the *Je ne sçai quoi*, which next follows the *Bagatelle*, and is not to be found, I believe, but in *France*. They say, one should write as he speaks, and the Women are already in Possession of Wit for Conversation, as well as the Men; 'tis properly among them the *Bagatelle* displays itself, and adorns the Persons that know how to make use of it. They have therefore Reason to write, and the Men ought not only to join with them for Wit, but even yield it to them. They have possess'd themselves of the Government, and have Force and Authority in their Hands; they ought gallantly to leave Agreeableness and Finery to the Women, whatever those Things may be. The Women would become more accomplish'd by them, and the Men, in their Commerce with them, would be the more happy, since after all, the Women bring the Men whatever they have that is aimiable; and 'tis certain, the Women would not shew their bright Parts were it not to please them, as they are not beautiful but for them. So that in Conformity to the Reflections I have made in the Beginning of my Letter, and protesting against all Abuse, in Case they should not make use of this Advantage with Discretion, I would adjudge to their Sex, the Beautiful, the Agreeable and the Nice in Matters of Wit, as they have them already in Things that relate to the Body; I would join these two Things as being made to be together, and which we have

no Reason to separate, and I would improve Nature itself in their Favour. 'Tis certain, that this Sex, when they preserve the Agreeableness that is proper for them, and don't mix any Thing that is foreign to it, have more Delicacy of Wit than Men. It becomes a Woman better to say pretty Things than it does a Man, as Beauty is more becoming in Women than Men; they speak with more Softness and Bashfulness, and consequently with a better Grace, and every Thing, even to the Tone of their Voice, is suitable to what they speak, and adds new Ornaments. A Man ought to speak rationally, and with Dignity, answerable to his Height, and a majestick Air which become him, and 'tis in them he ought to take Pleasure. But the Truth on't is, Men, generally speaking, are not satisfy'd with those Things, and there are but few that have Reason enough to be above the Beautiful and the Nice, especially the *French*. Their Politeness and other Things enervate the Understanding, and besides the Women Authors, they have Authors that have the Weakness of Women in great Numbers. I must say something of them.

The Wits of this Kind make their principal Merit consist in a fine Stile, the Purity of Diction and the Manner of Writing according to the Mode. The Stile independant of what is express'd, is an Affair of Importance in *France*, and valued at a high Rate. There's no doubt but with most Readers, a Book writ in a fine Stile, tho' otherways trifling, will be read much more than another that may be very instructive, and even witty, but writ in a bad Stile. 'Tis true the Thing has not come to pass that I know of; but if it should, I am persuaded there would be a great Consternation in the *French Parnassus*,
and

and that all the Muses would be frighten'd at such an unlucky Event. For the Maids of the *Holy Hill* are like all the rest in this Respect, that they don't love to appear in a bad Equipage, and often take so much Pleasure in adorning themselves, that they don't know one another, and inspire the Wit of Dress instead of that of Thoughts and Sentiments. The Crowd of Readers does on their Part what the People are us'd to do, when they see a great deal of Finery: They amuse themselves with the Shew which dazzles them, and take no Notice of any Thing else. It may, perhaps, be true that there's some Design in this Kind of Writing, and that the Writers, to honour the *French* Language, for which they have here an extraordinary Veneration, try whether there may not be a Way of improving it, independant of Thoughts, in the room of which they place Turns and Harmony, and likewise figurative Ways of Speaking, whereof there are thousands in the *French* Language, which are as so many Thoughts annex'd to it, and adorn it. There's something more real than this Harmony, and the figurative Ways of Speaking, that is your Romances and Novels, which are almost as numerous in *France* as those Ways of Speaking. They are Realities among Nothings, and their use is to make Men go from Nothing to the Bad, to which the other serves for an Introduction. The fine Stile join'd to the Approbation of the Publick, which Writers look upon as the chief End of every Work, are the two Things that make bad Writers so numerous in *France*; and lessen the Merit of the good ones; of such, at least, that have not the Courage to set themselves above such Things

As these; as much as is necessary. We ought either not to write, or write Things that are superior to Stile; and an Author ought to be by his Character, as well as by his Works, above the Crowd, which are the main Part of the Publick.

After these Wits we must place those who distinguish themselves on all Sorts of little Subjects, and are an Honour to their Nation by their Numbers, as well as by the Brilliant they entertain us with. By this, the Nation, as much as by their Women Authors, has the Advantage of every other Nation, and in my Opinion, of all other Nations together. If those other Wits make *France* the Country of Encomiums and Panegyricks, of Comedies and Operas, of Romances and Novels; these here make it the Country of Songs; Drinking-Songs and Dancing-Songs; Satyrick and Love-Songs; Obscene and Impious-Songs; and lastly, the Country of Ballads; which give the Vulgar an Opportunity of partaking of the Pleasures of the polite People, and make the Songs be heard aloud in the Streets, in the Towns and the High-ways in the Country. This Fertility of Wit fills *France* with Stanzaes and Sonnets, Fables and Stories, Descriptions and New-Year's-Gifts, Parodies and Rhimes, Roundoes and Ballads, Pastorals and Eclogues, Madrigals and Epigrams, Riddles and Epitaphs, Odes, Epistles and Elegies; and every Man of Gallantry is compell'd to write something: 'Tis like a Capitation which the Fashion levies of these People; and there are some, who finding themselves incapable of furnishing any Thing to this Fund of Poetry, apply themselves to their Friends, who pay for them. To their Copiousness, we must add their ready Wit, or

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Wit at a Pinch, whereof we see Essays from Time to Time, which do most Honour to those who succeed in them. But these Essays have not been very fortunate hitherto; and all these Sports of Wit, as well as these others that are more celebrated, which have their Theatre, are Sports for the People for whom they are provided, much more than for those who contrive them, and divert themselves by writing them. The ready Wit falls to the Share of People that shine in Conversation, who are likewise possess'd of Jest, Sallies of Wit, Puns, obliging Expressions, Drollery and agreeable Galleries, smart Rapertees, Equivocation and playing with Words, Proverbs, merry Stories, pretty Expressions, fashionable Ways of Speaking, and other Advantages which, if they don't confer Titles, attract, at least, Encomiums to those who distinguish themselves that Way, and are distinguish'd from the Vulgar, that can't speak any thing but what is natural. Would not you be of Opinion, Sir, that the *French* ought to be left in Possession of these Advantages which Nature has given them, and by which they accomplish themselves by studying to cultivate them, and to content ourselves with the Character of plain good Sense, without any Ornament, which she gives us, and to associate ourselves in this Respect with the People, with whom they range us?

I embrace you, SIR, &c.

LETTER



LETTER VI.

Of TRAVELLING.



YOU have seen me, Sir, return'd from my Travels; and you have rejoic'd with me upon that Occasion. I now offer you a fresh Subject of rejoicing, in acquainting you with my present Condition, and the agreeable Life I lead in the Country, on the Estate which I have inherited, and which the Remembrance of my preceding Travels renders compleatly delicious. If Travelling ought to redound any way considerably to our Advantage, and if Rest, as being sweet, ought to succeed Labour, 'tis in the Country that we may hope for those Advantages: The Life one leads in a City is too full of Hurry; we pass it in stroling from House to House, from one Company to another, to which we lie unavoidably expos'd by those by whom we are surrounded on every Side: This is no other than Travelling. In my Opinion, the Country alone fixes us in our natural Situation: It places us, agreeably, in the Mid-Way between Retirement and Society, as well as between Repose and Labour, which we, there, may cause to succeed each other, even just as we please: It

withdraws us from all Manner of Dependance, and sets us at Liberty ; without which we cannot possibly be happy. Here we meet with By-Paths, which furnish us with Means to shun the Crowd, and to pass away Life with Pleasure. Custom, the Scourge of Men of Sense, and which, in Cities, reigns with an arbitrary Sway, here, scarce maintains Authority enough to be even so much as taken Notice of; and Opinion, upon which one depends when once we have any Regard to Custom, in like Manner ceases to torment us. The Happiness we seek for, tho' without knowing in what it consists, and for which we, therefore, seek in vain, here makes itself known, and offers itself to us. Here, our Manners are soften'd, our Passions grow calm, our Schemes and Designs diminish, and our whole Race of Life becomes quiet and sedate; or, at least, the Country is the Place where all that may the most easily be attain'd, and where, naturally, the Inclination for those Things should be form'd: And, undoubtedly, this is the Place of Prospect, from whence one ought to take a View of the World, in order to be acquainted with it, and to make ones Choice. A small Term of Retirement, and the Reflections it produces, do perfectly well after some Years Travelling, and dispose one to put all to the Use to which it ought to have been design'd. Nay, I can't help fancying, that it is here, in the retir'd Life one enjoys in the Country, that we actually form ourselves for Society. It is where we become calm and easy, and where we attain to the Knowledge of our ourselves: It is the Means of returning to an orderly, regular Course of Life, if we have any Inclination that way; and it is certain,
that

that no irregular, disorderly Person can ever be truly sociable: Who can be orderly with others, if not so with himself? In chusing, therefore, this Kind of Life, I have not, as you seem to tax me, withdrawn myself from Society; on the contrary, as I drew nearer to my native Country, in quitting foreign Parts, in order to repatriate, I now once more approach it, in stripping myself of all that smells outlandish, and which prevents my being a Man, to acquit myself of that which I owe to others, as well as to myself. Those who think of enjoying Life, will find, in the End, that the Country affords all the Advantages tending thereto, and to the putting it to a right Use: It is our primitive Station, and the Sentiments I have of it are Tokens of its being so: It is where I, for my Part, desire to live and die.

But, it is my Opinion, that I am come late, and that I ought to hasten myself to reap some Benefit. Half my Life seems to be near elaps'd, at least half of that Part of it which deserves that Name; and Time, which is precious throughout the whole Course of Life, should by me be esteem'd at a double Price. I ought, for the future, to manage it as one does the Remainder of ones Substance, when most of it is consum'd; and, in Effect, this is the Subject of my present OEconomy. Multiplicity of Acquaintance, unnecessary Visits, the reading of all Sorts of Books, or indeed much of any Kind of Reading, any agreeable Correspondences by Letters, or the like; these are the great Expences which I avoid. It is not so easy for me to give an Account of the Profits, or of the good Uses I put my Time to; and, perhaps, I am like those young, raw OEconomists, who for

Fear of misplacing their Money, do nothing at all with it. Nevertheless, it is true, that I have my Views; that is, I propose to live, to reap Advantage from myself, as well as from Time, and to enjoy what I have of my own; to know Man in endeavouring to attain the Knowledge of myself: For, in Reality, it is somewhat unaccountable, that Man, who loves himself above every Thing else in the World, should be desirous of knowing every Thing else before he knows himself, and that Quiet and Tranquillity, from whence that Knowledge is alone extracted, should be Happineesses so long unknown to him. Generally speaking, he never attains it till he has run thro' an Infinity of Toil and Fatigue; and happy for him if ever they bring him to it: My Sentiment, from hence forwards, will be, that as War ought not to be wag'd but with a View of obtaining and enjoying Peace, and to re-establish that Peace upon a firmer Foundation, so none should undertake to travel but in order, at length, to live peaceably at home, and enjoy his Ease unmolested. If all People arriv'd at that Happineess, by Means of their Peregrinations, it might, indeed, be said, that Fortune, whom so many Travellers hunt for without ever meeting with her, waits for them at their Return, and that, with this Prospect, every one ought to make all possible Hasten to set out: As for the other Profits one reaps from Travelling, they seem, in my Eye, to be very inconsiderable. I sometimes consider them, making serious Reflections upon Travels; and you can't imagine how very needless and unprofitable I look upon the greatest Part of them to be, and how far I am from attempting to justify those Tours I have been taking. Every Voyage,

Voyage, or Journey taken merely for Custom-fake, I look upon as no good Undertaking, and think all the Time spent therein lost and misemploy'd. 'Tis upon this very Head that I am going to tell you my Thoughts; and I wish I could communicate them to all the World: Nor should I believe that I had travell'd to no Purpose, provided that, in painting out the Abuse of Travelling, I could but prevent any one from throwing away his Time in rambling Abroad.

I take it to be with Travelling as it is with the greatest Part of Customs, which, originally, were found to be wholesome and well intended, but which grew to Abuses and Nuisances, when they subsisted longer than the Causes to which they ow'd their Rise. Some great and discerning Men took it into their Heads to travel, with the View of searching, among the politer and better regulated Nations, for Laws and Institutions, which were wanting in their own, or of acquiring the Knowledge of such Things wherein they were themselves deficient. These were either Legislators, or Philosophers, who imagin'd they could not, by any other Means, attain to the Accomplishment of their Designs. Their Compatriots most gladly depended on their Care in the Execution of those Commissions; and content with being themselves Sharers in the Gain, voted Honours to those Persons who had been the Projectors of what redounded so much to their Benefit and Advantage. I conjecture, that, after this, an Itch of being so honour'd and esteem'd, Curiosity, a restless Disposition, with other such like Motives, induc'd others likewise to betake themselves to ramble; this brought on bartering of Commodities; which,

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accordingly as it increas'd, and grew more and more extensive, occasion'd Travelling to become more in Use, and easier to be undertaken and perform'd. By little and little, and more especially by Imitation, the Number of Travellers swell'd; and the Incapacity of Parents to breed up their Sons, which oblig'd them to have Recourse to this Expedient, has, at length, brought Travelling to be a very common Thing; a Custom; which is what dispenses People from giving Reasons for what they do, and which, thereby, is become the strongest and most efficacious of all Reasons. This Custom, whereby Travelling is authoriz'd, and as it were establish'd, is by so much the more pernicious, as the People we visit in our Travels, the polite People, whose Customs and Manners of Living are prescrib'd as Models, are the most corrupt; at least in some certain particular Respects; so that, consequently, there is more to be lost than won among them. So it was, that the *Romans* dissipated their Remnant of Virtue among the *Greeks*; that, in the last Centuries, People were corrupted by travelling into *Italy*; and that, in these our Days, Travellers resort to *France* in search of false Merit; a Merit which harbours Corruption by throwing a Veil over it.

Divers Reasons are found out in the Vindication of Travelling, in order to stop the Mouths of such as are not satisfy'd barely with its being authoriz'd by Custom; and the chief of those Reasons are reduc'd to the Alterations and Improvements it must of necessity work on the Characters of young People. Their Character is generally speaking, vicious; a Removal or an Amendment of this is what is aim'd at:

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'Tis hop'd, that by giving them the Opportunity of seeing better Examples, they will modellize thereupon, and change their Dispositions; nay, this Change is depended on as already come. But I would willingly ask, In what consist the Changes that are expected from Man, and which are look'd on as depending on himself? I profess, that I cannot allow them such a Length as to deserve that he should travel for them; neither do I believe them to be of a Nature to be obtain'd by that Method. It seems to me, that, most commonly, this is no other than the Passage from one of the Periods of Life to the other, and not in the least a Passage from a bad Character to a good one; and that it is no Manner of Change in Man's Essential. It may very well be of Man as of Fruits: They have their Seasons; are green, they grow ripe, and they corrupt; as to the rest, the good are good, and the bad are bad; all this by Nature. Some Improvement, indeed, they may receive by a convenient Soil, Situation, &c. their Colour and Taste may be thereby somewhat improv'd; yet all that does not go so far as to alter their Kind, or to make good what is naturally otherwise. And if even this could be brought to bear, I cannot still think, that Travelling can ever work the same Effect upon Men as Culture does upon Vegetables, or that it can be so really beneficial to Youth as the Education that may be given them at home; at least Experience, to which its Champions have Recourse to prove it, does not prove it at all. We have, here, very lately, seen a Person return from his Travels, and People full of their Exclamations upon the wonderful Transformation wrought in him; when there was none in the least but
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what Time would, of necessity, have brought on: This was a tardy Fruit, then come to its Maturity, and which in its own native Soil would have ripen'd full as soon. It is my Opinion, that all the Changes which are remark'd in young People are of the very same Nature; they are to come; and if they happen to appear in a Traveller, it is only because Travelling was no more capable of preventing than it was of producing them. Travels are perform'd, commonly, in an Age wherein the Periods which, in Life, successively form themselves are extremely sensible; they continue long enough to give Room for one of those Periods to form itself, and ordinarily reach that Period which conveys us beyond our Puerility, or our fiery juvenile Years, to the Age of Reason. Young Travellers, therefore, must needs return home in some Measure chang'd: But this Change would, doubtless, have been brought about with more Facility, and would have extended farther, was there, in Travelling, an Opportunity of enjoying that sedate and retir'd Sort of Life, which is requisite towards the producing both that, and every Thing which may benefit Mankind. This Sort of Life it is that we ought rather to seek, nay even to search for it in remote Places, in case we cannot obtain it at home: There, in finding ourselves, we should attain to all that is necessary for us to find, and we should give Room for very considerable Changes, if in us such were wanting. Out of that, and in the perpetual Hurry and Agitation in which we live, we only pass through all Sorts of inconsiderable Changes, or assume all Kinds of Shapes, merely to continue the same we are, to repair, by the Diversity thereof, the Insufficiency that there

there may be in our Character. In a Word, whether we do not change at all, or if we do change to the Point towards which we ought to incline; if from bad and vicious, as we once were, we turn about and become good and virtuous, acquire a true Way of thinking, and a Rectitude of Judgment which we had not before, I am very positively persuaded, that we ought to attribute all to Causes of far greater Efficacy, than are either Travelling, or any of the common Methods practis'd by us, in order to produce those Effects.

And how shall we be capable of changing ourselves, and determining upon the Methods which are to produce this Change, since we do not, as yet, rightly know what it is that we ought to be, what it is to be a Man? Have we attain'd any clear and certain Idea of that Particular, as we have of Things of less Moment? For Example, as we have of those Brute Creatures, which are created for the Use of Man. None are ignorant that the Horse is made for Burden, and the Ox to bear the Yoke; that the Cow, &c. give Milk, and the Sheep Wool; and that this is the Nature, the Essential of those Animals. Neither is any one more put to it in regard to what is believ'd to be the Essential of the several different Stations of Life a Man may enter into; as a Magistrate, a Commander, a Merchant, an Artizan, or the like; and very ready and very particular Answers are made to Questions started upon that Subject. But they will not so readily and precisely tell one in what consists the Essential of Man; of Man in himself, independent of these different Stations and Conditions: On this Point Men do not agree; and have only confus'd and rambling Ideas

Ideas which afford little or no Satisfaction. It is certain, that Man is a Creature consummately excellent; but little known; as little to himself as he is to others: And there is no small Appearance, that it is Order alone, when he re-enters into it, that can remove the Veil from before his Eyes. It imports him to carry within his ownself both his Occupation and his Dignity, and not to find himself reduc'd to be made this or that, in order to employ, improve, or advance himself: Nay, he ought even to be above all Stations whatever, in which he may happen to be plac'd, how eminent soever they may be; and by so much the rather, as all those Stations and Conditions of Life have in View nothing but the Re-establishment of Humanity. But since Man has lost his Occupation, his Dignity, the Knowledge of that which regards him is likewise lost, and in the Disorder we are in, we are ignorant even of what our Occupation and our Dignity consists in. As it is Order alone that can bring us to this Knowledge, I believe, that there is but one only Method to re-enter into Order; this is to follow the Instinct existing within us; the natural Instinct, which is, perhaps, all we have of the primitive State of Man, and which is left us to re-conduct us to it. All the living Beings, we know of, have theirs, which does not deceive them: Must not Man, who is the most excellent of all these Beings, have his Instinct; such an Instinct as extends itself throughout his whole Character, and as is no less infallible than extensive? Undoubtedly he has it; and this Instinct is the Conscience, wherein the Deity makes himself known to us, and converses with us. By not pursuing this Instinct, which, above
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all Things, we ought to cultivate, both in ourselves and in our Children, it is that we have not the Knowledge of what Man is; and, for Want of this Knowledge, we are in an Uncertainty as to what regards the Education of Youth, and are at a Loss how to employ them, to prevent their falling into those Excesses to which Inaction and their immature Years naturally incline them.

Such Parents as are not themselves in a State of Humanity, and are, barely, fix'd in Stations thereunto relating, have, for their Off-spring, nothing in View except those very Stations and Conditions of Life, and, with those very same Motives, devote and dedicate them to the same, Humanity, consider'd in itself, not having the least Share in their Procedure, nor, in the least, inspiring them with a Knowledge of the Principles or Fundamentals which make a Man. From thence it comes to pass, that they find themselves at a Loss at the Juncture when their Sons shou'd give Instances of their being Men, it plainly appearing that they are not so, just at the Time when they have attain'd the Age of Reason, without, as yet, having wherewithal to hide that Want of Humanity, which is visible in them, and which the several States of Life, to which they are destin'd, in some Measure, help to conceal. The Parents then, not knowing what better Course to take, abandon them to themselves, and to Chance, to which the Education they give them naturally reduces them: They send them abroad to travel; that is to say, to acquire a Merit, of which they have a confus'd and indeterminate Idea, and with which Travelling (confus'd and indeterminate itself as it is) must needs furnish them.

Travelling

Travelling perfectly well proves our Ignorance and the Loss of Humanity, which we ramble the World to search, without knowing what we seek for, and which we flatter ourselves to have found, according to the exterior Appearance of what we meet with, and accordingly as it flatters our Imagination.

One of the principal Advantages of this Nature regards the Mind. In Youth, it seems, it must be form'd by Travelling; and it is one of the chief Motives that sends them Abroad. In Effect, it is upon the Mind, by affording it incessant Opportunities of Improvement, that Travelling should chiefly operate. But this Occupation, besides its accustoming us to value ourselves upon what we term Wit, and therein to center our whole Merit, which is far from a good Character, we form this Wit upon no other Model than the general one, which is not the best Method. It casts us into Imitation, which never produces any thing grand or noble: It causes us to consider a Turn of Wit (as it is call'd) as a Matter of mighty Importance, and occasions our assuming what is none of our own, and which is neither convenient for, nor belongs to us. It forms a Mind more to Decision than to Reflection, or Discernment, and renders it rather bold than just. Besides, in subjecting ones Mind to a certain Point, and in accustoming it to consider what is presented to it only after a certain receiv'd and fashionable Manner, we confine and limit it while it is in its Production, and divert it both from what it might produce new of itself, and in which its true Beauty consists, and from the Liberty of Thought, its real Vigour. But why are we to be so much concern'd about the Formation of
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our Wit? It is not unlikely, that the Interior, all one as the Exterior, of Man may be of a Nature to form and display itself, without requiring any farther Assistance than that of Truth and Reality, together with the Conversation of some Persons of Sense and Judgment, in order to corroborate it, and to inure it to execute its Functions. Nothing is requir'd but what is easily to be obtain'd, and what every one meets with in his own Country. In a Word, one needs not be reduc'd to go very far to seek for what is necessary for us: That seems natural to so noble a Creature as Man, and even to every Creature; and the Assistance of the other Countries, which we visit in our Travels, has I know not what of something in it foreign to a Man, and that even favours of Impertinence. True it is, that the Mind, when it abandons and delivers up itself to its own Strength, may, according to the common Idea, harbour something in it monstrous and deform'd; but in this State it is original: It soars, it aspires, and dares consider and look at all Things as they actually are in their Nature: It places itself above Expressions and Turns which confine it, as well as above Precedents and Prejudices which stop its Career, and is in a State of following Truth, whithersoever she conducts it. This is, doubtless, the Aim of Nature, who places not in the Character of Wit, the Reason which she gives to Men, so much Diversity to the End that they should disfigure it by imitating one another; but with a View of displaying her Store, and of giving Man Room to manifest the Wonders of Humanity. All this not only does not oblige us to travel, but it may be from hence gather'd that,
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in what Manner soever it may be, it is an Abuse to think of fashioning the Mind alone, independant of Truth, and of therein making to consist the principal Article of the Education we bestow upon our Youth. It is their Hearts which we ought to endeavour to frame and regulate, by inculcating to them the Principles of Justice and Probity, without having so deep a Concern for the rest, which will follow readily enough of itself: The Qualities of the Heart excuse us from the flashy Ornaments of the Mind, and sufficiently embellish us, or they rectify and bring to Perfection the others; and after all, it is only the Man who abounds in laudable Qualities that the Embellishments of the Mind would become, as it is only Meadows and Gardens that are adorn'd with Flowers. Man, in his Corruption, is an uncultivated Land: To go about to fashion his Mind in that State, would be planting Flowers in a Thicket of Brambles, which all the Flowers in the World would never render agreeable. But if that Ground is clear'd, and has the Care and Pains it requires bestow'd upon it, it will of itself become beautiful, by producing divers Sorts of Herbs, each of which will have its respective Flower and Virtue.

Another great Benefit, which is pretended to accrue from Travelling is, the Knowledge of the World. By seeing Men, and reading the great Book of the Universe, say those Champions, one cannot avoid attaining that Knowledge: In this they are somewhat in the Right. If by the Knowledge of the World, is understood the Manner of People's living in the World, it is, indeed, by Travelling, having a View of the different Scenes, and the various Personages
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which the World presents to our Sight, that we may acquire the Knowledge of it. But there is, in Reality, nothing in all that which can afford any very great Satisfaction; since we thereby only become acquainted with Manners, Customs and outward Decorums which enter little into the Character of a Man. All these Matters, even if they could be just as we would wish them to be, do not conclude any thing in Favour of him who possesses them, since they are liable to be assum'd by a Knave, an Impostor, if it is his Interest so to do: Nay, and it is very possible, that an honest Man, such a Man in Reality as even the most beautiful Appearances might induce us to imagine him to be, may neglect them. This Knowledge is the very same that is to be met with throughout the World, and tends only towards rendering us like to that Appearance, and to set a great Value upon what we, by those Means, are not perfectly acquainted with, but observe it to be esteem'd by others, whom we suppose to be sensible of its Worth, and to see therein Things impenetrable to our Opticks. Much better would it be for us to be acquainted with the Man, than with his Mask; with the Springs which set him at Work, talking and acting, than with his Exterior, and the Droll he is playing. This Knowledge, indeed, not only guides us to that of ourselves, to which all true Knowledge of Man ought to bear some Reference, but it may be, likewise, of Use, in furnishing us with Occasions of setting a Price upon Appearances, which may, otherwise, deceive us, and, in Conclusion, to put us out of Conceit with a Kind of Life made up of nothing but false Colours. The true Knowledge

of the World is that of Mankind its Inhabitants, that of the Bottom of their Character, and of the Advantage that may be drawn from thence: It makes us discover Things directly opposite to the Appearances which attract us, and it must of necessity produce an opposite Effect. Travelling does not procure it us; and Strangers are neither more worthy of our Attention, nor easier to be known than are the People we live among.

On the contrary, one of the Obstacles we meet with in this Study, is an Exterior, which employs our Thoughts, and stops us: These foreign Manners, these new Circumstances divert our Attention, and contribute towards concealing Men from us; whereas the Exterior to which our Eyes are accustom'd, does not so much employ us, and is to us a far less Obstacle. As to the rest, since the World is known to be a superficial Matter, and that its Nature is not to be penetrated, one would willingly ask, In what Manner the Knowledge of the World so highly honours those who have attain'd it, and that they thereby acquire the Title of *Men of the World*?

There are some Travellers who apply themselves chiefly to the Study of the Language of the Country which they visit in their Travels: They have in View the reading of the Books they there meet with; and these, in particular, fancy they travel to some Purpose, and reap Advantage from foreign Regions. But I cannot think, that they are upon any better Foundation than the rest; and to me it appears, that this Sort of Study, and, indeed, that of Languages in general, may be, for the most Part, no other than an Abuse. Life is so very

ry short, that this Occupation, extended beyond the Term in which a Man is fit for nothing else, if it is true that there is a Term of which this may be said, has something in it disproportionate and ridiculous. It is as if an Artizan, when so much hasten'd that he has but one Day allow'd him to finish the Piece of Work in Hand, should squander away the whole Morning in getting ready other Tools and Utenfils, besides those he had before, and with which he might make an End of his Business very well.

Nay, for the Generality of Mankind, this Sort of Study has something in it still vainer: They cram whole Magazines full of Utenfils and Implements without having any Occasion for them; without being Workmen: For I look upon the reading of Books, as it is now establish'd in the World, ought to be less regarded than a Piece of Work, than any thing else laid hold on to exempt one from doing one's Duty; that it is no other than an idle Amusement, which, generally speaking, is of less Value than even Idleness itself, and that is of less Worth than are a Number of other Amusements which Mankind make Use of to fool away their Time. To travel in order to procure that Satisfaction, is running after a Thing which, even at home, is not worth the Pains of being sought for, and that with the bare Time employ'd in it is always purchas'd too dear. Let us lay aside Travelling for a Moment, that I may have the Pleasure of communicating to you my Thoughts concerning Reading.

For my Part, I take it, that one needs read no more than just enough for a little Instruction, to amuse a few idle Moments, and to

give some Nourishment to the Spirits, when they begin to flag, and languish, and cannot without Difficulty support themselves. I look not upon any Books to be really good, or excellent, except such as treat of the Faculties the Authors themselves actually profess, and excel in; since it is certain, that none can know a Thing so well as such who know it by Experience. Some of those who have made Profession of Wisdom and Probity, and have excell'd therein, have wrote upon that Subject; and these Books ought to suffice us: They are distinguish'd from others; nay, more especially because they contain Sentiments which is the essential Language of Man, of Man in a State of Order, who says what actually passes within himself, and who, while in his natural Simplicity, can never fall into the embarrassing, crooked and troublesome Paths of Reasoning. We are reduc'd to have Recourse to so much Reasoning, merely for Want of cultivating the Sentiments we have within us, and which would never fail us, would we but pursue them; did we but cultivate the Humanity they would produce. These Sentiments sprout up in the Heart, from a Seed which lies there conceal'd, and which nothing but an Inclination to Virtue, at certain critical Minutes, is capable of animating. As they form themselves in Humanity, they bear a perfect Affinity thereto; and the Truths they contain bear no less a Conformity to Man than do the Means which produce them. Reasoning, when we abandon ourselves to it, by making our principal Language and Discourse to consist in Argument, smothers our Sentiments; and as it is from a corrupted Taste that it proceeds, it more and more

more by Degrees, corrupts our Taste, and we wander away from that Simplicity, in which Truth is to be met with. Man, in his State of Simplicity, is ignorant of the Art of Reasoning; and he who has his true Occupation neglects it. It agrees only with that Inaction, that Leisure, which throws us out of the State of Humanity, and with a certain false Curiosity, which that Leisure engenders; and it ought to be left to our heady stubborn Casuists, in whom it chiefly operates, and manifests its Miracles; to the Republick of Sages, who make Knowledge their Capital, and who, in their Intoxication, renounce the Advantages of the Heart, of which they know nothing, and which are utterly lost in them.

In this State, an obstinate Positiveness, and a froward Spirit of Controversy, take place of the Love of Truth, of the conscious Diffidence of knowing it ourselves, and of the Moderation which is requisite towards making it known to others. I cannot help looking upon these People, as the Authors of all that is worthless and ridiculous in Books, and, consequently, as the Authors of one of the Sources of Man's Folly and Corruption: Such Heaps of frivolous, useless Trash as they write, and treat of as Matters of Importance, is, doubtless, the Occasion that all Sorts of People betake themselves to writing, and stuff the World with Fooleries and Nothings; and the Example they give of an insatiable Reading, of a whole Life spent in Reading, as in an Exercise becoming and proper for Man, has, likewise, its Effect, and promotes Reading more than it would, otherwise, be. In laying aside all this Reading, in leaving to the Vulgar, of what Kind soever they be, those

Myriads of Volumes which are written for them, and which, in my Opinion, would be sufficient to pervert and make them Vulgar, if they were not such before, we should have our Imagination less loaded with Opinions, which distort and make it crooked, and less accusom'd to Trifles, Nothings, which extenuate and reduce it to nothing: We should approach nearer to the Truth, inasmuch as we should the more give ourselves up to what is transacted in the Heart, which is agreeable to the Truth, and where Truth, if suffer'd to act, seldom fails making Impression: We should not measure it by Rules which limit or confine it; and, above all, we should be considerable Gainers in that we should not reject that which does not agree with what we imagine we know already, which is what does us a hundred Times more Harm than all the Knowledge we can pick up from Reading will ever do us Good. Man is not made to heap up Ideas, and to cram Magazines with them, but to give them Room to fashion themselves within him, upon every Occasion, and thereby to make a simple, unmix'd Use of his Reason; nor is it by any other Method that he preserves the Liberty of Thought, upon which all true Knowledge is grounded. It may be said of such Numbers of People, who amass their Knowledge by an unlimited Reading, that they are more ignorant even than the very Vulgar themselves, to whom they give that Denomination; that they are far less acquainted with the real Knowledge of Man, that Knowledge without which all the rest, far from adorning, serve only to render him hideous, by giving a Sort of Luster to a deform'd Character, which in no wise deserves it. By this Knowledge,

ledge, unknown to the Learned, the deep-read Men, I understand that which teaches us the Price of Things; which is a Point that always should be kept in View. The greatest Part of their Learning makes apparent how remote they are from that Point: It is founded upon their Ignorance, and proves it; since it wholly consists in a Chaos of Transactions and Opinions which, in the main, tend to nothing at all; in a Medley of Arguments they make Use of to display the Art and Method of Argumentation, as Boys climb to let People see that they can climb. Nay, these Folks have even a greater Share of Stupidity than all others; since they are less capable of suffering themselves to be disabus'd, and of being made sensible of the Emptiness, the *Vacuum* of the Profession which of all Professions in the whole World has the most of it, I mean the Nothingness of their Erudition; for that is the Matter most in Question among the Learned; they must be, as it were, *distinctur'd* from their Literature, before they can be reduc'd to the State of Nature, Man ought to be in, and to receive the naked, simple and familiar Truth, which is the Ornament of Humanity. Less than any others in the World are they possess'd of the right Sense, the Attention, and Freedom of Thought which render a Man reasonable, conversable and fit for Society, and, in Effect, which render him *Man*. Their Library, as it furnishes out their Character, so it is the Source of their Ideas, and their sole Guide; and one is reduc'd to converse with them upon the same Footing as we sometimes do with Children, when we ask them Questions, in Hopes of some natural, pretty Reply: If the Mother, Nurse, or the like is

by, the Children are not suffer'd to speak for themselves, but somebody either answer for them, or put Words into their Mouths. To conclude, we ought to comprehend, that it shews a Weakness of Understanding to suffer one's self to be impos'd on by all these usefess Trifles; that the Book-learned Part of the World, who have attain'd an exact and methodical Knowledge of all that we have no Manner of Occasion for, are a Species of Mankind we might perfectly well dispense with, and whom it would be very beneficial we were without; and that this Species is no other than a Singularity of Nature, which she has expos'd to our View merely for our Instruction, at least, if we may be permitted to accuse Nature with this odd fantastical Character. Perhaps, she gives these People an Inclination to Reading, and a Capacity for Erudition much after the same Manner as she gives to some certain Persons a Propension to eat much, and a capacious Maw to contain what they swallow: Thereby she makes us comprehend the Benefit she bestows upon those to whom she gives a free, disengag'd Mind, fit to act, and to bring itself over to what is proper and convenient for it, to that which is really agreeable to Man. Let us now return to Travelling.

A main Advantage pleaded in the Behalf of Travelling, and which is mightily built upon, is the Men of Merit, those excellent Men who are to be met with dispers'd up and down the World: That is what is to be seen, cry our Sticklers, and to seek out them it is that we ought to direct our Steps. It is true that this is what may be propos'd with the most plausible Appearance of Reason. Since People travel

to see Men, they ought to endeavour to get a Sight of that Part of Mankind who are truly Men: But the Difficulty lies in the finding them, and in not undergoing a Transformation thereupon. If I might speak my Sentiment as freely upon this Subject as upon others, I would willingly avow, concerning the Man of Merit, that, in some Respect, he is not to be met with at all, and after that I had render'd him as it were transparent in one of my Letters, I should be tempted (in changing a little the Ideas in his Regard) to render him wholly invisible in this. By this Man of Merit, I mean him who has Principles of which he never loses Sight, and to which both his Words and his Actions bear a strict Reference; the Man, who, being Master of no less a Share of Courage than of Reason, not only knows the Value of Things, but dares act accordingly, and whose Motives, which have no less than the Deity for their Center, are still more estimable than are even his Actions; the Man, in all whose Views Conscience bears a Part, and who, during the whole Course of his Life, uses his utmost Endeavour to answer the Intent which his Creator might have had in creating him, without which he does conceive that a Man cannot possibly have any true Merit. In a Word, the Man of Merit is he who is really a Man, a Man fram'd for Dominion. Nor is this an *Ænigma*, a Riddle not to be explain'd. Man's Dominion extends over the Little World, the Microcosm, Himself; whether therein to maintain Order, if any there already is, whether to establish it, if there is none. When he puts in Practise this Dominion, he is a Man; he is in a Condition to execute the Will of his Creator, and
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the Creator takes Delight in making it known to him, and in making Himself known to him; exteriorly, by the Works of the Creation, and by Divine Writ, whereof He gives him the requisite Intelligence, and interiorly, by the natural Instinct which causes him to depend immediately upon the Creator. Proportionably as a Man approaches this State, which is to say, proportionably as he becomes a Man, he gradually becomes a Man of Merit, and as he gradually becomes that, he is less seen, and endeavours still to appear less. As his Conduct is extremely simple and plain, marching with an equal Pace, strait on, without turning this or that Way, his Conversation is likewise plain and simple, and serves only to expose the Sentiments of his Heart, in their own natural Colours. This Man is not in any wise an Object to be gaz'd at, a Man to make a Spectacle of; and he may be found to be a Person so very different from the Ideas we commonly have of Men of celebrated Merit, that except he has some particular Qualities that render him conspicuous, it is very possible, that of a hundred Persons who see him, there may not be two of them capable of discerning him. One may pass whole Days in Company with a *Plato*, without making any Discovery, without even suspecting that it is a *Plato* we are conversing with. Having reach'd the City of his Abode, one is in a Hurry to get a Sight of this extraordinary Man, on whose Account the Journey was undertaken; and one is strangely surpriz'd at finding this celebrated Philosopher, this *Plato*, no other than the same plain unregarded Foreigner, with whom we have often eat, drank and convers'd familiarly, without having

having taken any more Notice of him than of any other; at finding him the *Plato* we know already, and whom we know only for an ordinary Person.

But be those Men of Merit, whose Acquaintance we seek after, whatever they will, why must we needs seek for them among Strangers? Why do we not rather endeavour to be acquainted with those of our own Country? There are Men of Merit all the World over; and we must not imagine, but that the Thing which is the most valuable Part of the Earth, the Salt, the Quintessence of it, is distributed every where. But they are not known every where. Let us endeavour to discover those we have among ourselves; we may, perhaps, have Travelling enough before we meet with them; nor will the Journey afford either less Variety or Profit than if, in Search of them, we had travell'd to distant Regions. By taking a close View of People of all Classes, to whose Reputation we are no Strangers, we shall perceive how fallacious Reputation generally is; we shall become acquainted with those singular Tempers and Dispositions, which because their Sentiments differ from those of others, because they have a right Way of thinking, pass for odd and preposterous. We shall find in Persons, cry'd down and exclaim'd against for some mighty Failings, which render them insupportable, great Qualities, solid Judgment, Probity and Sincerity, which make rich Amends for all their so insupportable Blemishes; and in others, who are look'd upon as exempt from all Blame, we shall be so far from finding in them Encouragement to contract a Friendship, that we shall be put hard to it to discover in them any Footstep
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of Humanity. We shall be astonish'd to find Merit in People who never bore that Character, nor were ever regarded; and to meet with Arrogance, Presumption and Narrowness of Soul in the Majority of those who pass for grand Personages. We shall discover the Nothingness of these Men in Vogue, who are call'd smart, pretty Fellows, Men of Wit, and the contemptible Emptiness of those who bear the Title of *Literati*, Men of Letters and Erudition, if we extend our Curiosity so far as to dive into them. In a Word, we shall meet with, in our Ramble, abundance of Things we never expected, and very commodiously, much at our Ease, we may view those Objects. How much more agreeable ought we not to think this Sort of Travelling than the other? How much more advantageous must it not be, since it will bring us acquainted with those People among whom we are to pass our Lives? If by it we can but attain the Advantage of having no farther Dependence on the Opinion of Men, whom we know for such bad Judges, or at least, to depend less upon it, we shall have travell'd to a far better Purpose than if we had visited every Foot of Land in *Europe*.

If the Acquaintance of Persons of Merit is not a sufficient Motive to induce us to travel, still much less ought we to travel with the Opinion that Travelling, of itself, furnishes us with Merit. If it is true that the Ground-Work of all Merit is Integrity, or rather that Merit itself is the same as Integrity and Probity, after what Manner is it that we must needs acquire it by Travelling, as is pretended? It exposes before our Eyes a general Corruption, and plainly convinces us, that Virtue is a Stranger in every

every Climate; for in all Countries, the Bad is what generally presents itself to one's View, and what Remnant there still may be of Good, lies conceal'd; so that Travelling must much rather destroy than establish Merit in a Traveller, at least, in all those who are conversant only with undistinguish'd Persons, and who are more attentive to what is receiv'd by the Multitude than to Singularities, upon whom the Crowd set no Price, and which they themselves want a Capacity to do. Had Travelling no more then this one Inconveniency attending it, that a Traveller has perpetually before his Eyes the ordinary and corrupt Manner of Life now in Practice, which still confirms them in his own Corruption, and that the few Examples which oppose it are conceal'd from their Inspection, that ought to be sufficient to discredit Travelling; and the small Attention us'd by Travellers fully convince us, that People send their Youth abroad to see the World upon a Foundation quite different from the Prospect of seeing them return compleat Gentlemen.

In regard to the Majority of them, it may be said, that Travelling is a very efficacious Method to confirm them in the vicious Dispositions may be in them, and to persuade them, that Pleasure, Riches, Grandeur, Luxury, and the like, are Man's Blessings, that his Happiness consists in the Enjoyment of those Benefits, and that his Parts and Ability are display'd in procuring the Means, or at least, that it is only certain Excesses in all this that can be blame-worthy; that Persons of Merit are those who rectify Things, and avoid Excess, who know how to accommodate themselves according to the Time, and to manage their own Affairs,
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and that this is what it behoves every one to observe. Travelling is a Method very proper to give Youth a false Merit, which is, perhaps, more directly opposite to true Merit than are all the common Vices or Defects which we endeavour to correct in them. It is where they may confirm themselves in Presumption and Indocility, and assume an Assurance which compleats the rendering their Character important, even as important as they could wish it to be, and sets to it, as we may say, the finishing Stroke. Upon this Foot, it would be very true, that young People are fashion'd by Travelling; and Fathers, who generally have the same Ideas as their Sons, will have the Pleasure of seeing the Education they have bestow'd on them authoriz'd and brought to Perfection by Travelling. But let us examine a little after what Manner People perform their Travels; for after all, that is the Matter most in Question, in order to pass a Judgment, and to set a Price upon Travelling.

It is establish'd, that a young Man, who has attain'd a certain Age, must quit his Country, and that for the Reasons I have been already touching upon: He wants Education and Merit; the Publick perceives it, and cannot set that Value upon him as is desir'd. It is requisite, therefore, for him to absent himself, and to give Room to the Publick to forget him, to think that he is gone in Search of what he wants, and which he can never meet with at home. Or if this Reason does not take Place, if he is a promising, hopeful Youth, it is establish'd that Travelling is the readiest Way to compleat his Character; and with this View he is sent abroad. So that, for some Reason

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or other, Custom demands that a young Man should leave his Home, disappear for a while, and see the World. If this can be effected under the Direction of some prudent Person, who will take Care of him, will interpose between the World and him, and parry off its Blows, it will certainly be so much the better; and if the Ability and Capacity of this Tutor can extend so far as to make the corrupted, the corrupting World instrumental towards the rendering this young Man wise, all the Advantage that can possibly be hop'd for, both from the Tutor and from the World, is, certainly, obtain'd. But, for the Generality, this is not the Case; I speak only of ordinary Travellers. In what Country, or after what Manner soever they pass the Time allotted them for their Travels, is not much to the Purpose; they are in a foreign Country, and they remain there as long as they have Occasion. One would think, that the different Characters of Nations should carry along with them at least this Advantage, that such Persons who cannot bring it about to correct themselves by Reason, might there meet with Matter enough to do it, with less Difficulty, by Example and Practice: But this is what is not at all regarded; and it must be mere Chance, a favourable Chance that conducts them, and makes them find their *Antipodes*, People whose Character is opposite to their own, can stand Battle with it, and take its Place. They hope for and expect all Things from Travelling, and yet do not direct their Steps according to their Necessities; less clear-sighted in that Respect than in any other whatever. The Trader, who has Occasion for Wool, does not go to *Italy* for it, nor he who wants Silk

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to *England*: But Mr. such a one wants a little Flegm, and he goes to *France*: Another is found to have too much; his Friends desire to brighten him, and send him to travel in *Holland*. It is no Manner of Advantage to them, that there are Nations of different Characters; they peruse not the great Book of the World with the Attention and Application it requires; they only run it over, skipping from Place to Place, merely to look at the Pictures. They take a View of the Buildings of the Cities they pass thro', their Fortifications, Churches, Colleges, Hospitals, the Arsenal, the Library, the Cabinet of Curiosities, &c. They go to Court, and see the Prince at Dinner; they post themselves in his Way as he goes to Chapel, or get a near View of him on some other Occasion; and the Use they pretend to put all this to, is to talk of it, and to have it in their Power, every now and then, to say, *We have seen it; We have been there*. They make Provision of a Budget of Singularities, Facts, and little Adventures of their own to talk of, all which serves to help out in Conversation, which, more than all the rest, must needs be improv'd by Travelling; not unlike Boys, who run to the Sea Shore, and to shew they have been there, fill their Pockets with little Shells, they bring home all that serves to distinguish a Traveller from another Man. The Things that in their Conception have most of the *grand* in them, and consequently best worth seeing, are publick Solemnities, pompous Ceremonies, Reviews, Processions, Masquerades, and the like, as being Sightings which a vast Conflux of Spectators renders still more considerable; but more particularly a Coronation, which amasses People
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from all Parts: These make Travelling a Matter of Importance, as feeding the Traveller's Eyes with noble Spectacles. He who has the good Fortune to have been an Eye-Witness of a Solemnity of this Kind, has nothing more to see after that: He returns home to his Acquaintance, big with this, and as full of Joy and Content as if the Crown had been set upon his own Temples, and is by them receiv'd with Veneration. All that know of this glorious Circumstance of his Life, throng around him, look at him with Attention, and think, in Regard to him, that a peculiar Train of good Luck attends some People, and that they are born to extraordinary Rencounters. But, even when the Traveller has not all this to shew at his Return from his Peregrinations; when, instead of Diamonds, he has only Pebbles to produce, he still never fails coming home rich and satisfied: He is sensible of the Success of all Travels, and knows what waits for him at his Return. He was no more thought of; and here he appears all on a sudden, thereby become a new Man, on Account of the Eyes he draws after him, and which, in Effect, gives him a new Countenance. The Disposition of a whole City, waiting with Expectation, is at that Time chang'd for him, and it also changes his for all that see him, at least as long as the Feast lasts, and he has wherewithal to furnish out Matter for the Curiosity of those to whom he exposes himself as a Show. Before he is quite drain'd, another Traveller arrives, and turns away the Eyes of the Publick from him, and this last Comer is, in like Manner, exalted, and, by the Arrival of others, deliver'd from a too tiresome Perquisition: So that, in case Travels are not

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attended with all the Benefits which are attributed to them, they fail not, however, of being intirely as advantageous to the Traveller as he can either expect or desire: They put between him and the Publick wherewithal to content them reciprocally. The Publick will needs be fond of the Wonders which the World exposes to Sale, in being fond of those who have had a Sight of them; and these, for their Part, are over-joy'd at the Publick's Regard to them, on that Score, which renders them little Wonders themselves, and still confirms them in that Regard. Be it how it will, it is for the Publick that we travel, and it is the Publick that recompences the Pains we are at in travelling. To consider rambling the World in that Light, it would not be so unprofitable as it may appear at the first Blush; and we might, perhaps, find still other Advantages in it, if examin'd with the most favourable Dispositions. Let us look into this Affair: Let us continue to consider it on its fairest Side, and then return to what I at first intimated, concerning Man in general; wherein, it may be, I have not div'd deep enough.

I take it, that Men may be consider'd in two Lights. They are Men; that is to say, Creatures consummately noble, whose Price depends on themselves, by investing themselves with Humanity, whereby they shew themselves endow'd with all Kinds of Qualities which embellish and adorn them.

They may likewise be consider'd in the different Stations they hold in their respective Occupations, whether they have devoted themselves to officiate in the Magistracy, the Field, the School, in Trade, &c. They agree, and are
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right enough in the Idea they have of these different Professions, and in the Price they set upon them; nor are they very much at a Loss as to the Preparatives which these several Vocations require in order to officiate therein answerable to their Ideas. But in respect to Man in himself, in respect to plain, simple Humanity, their Idea is not so clear: The Case appears to them dubious and intricate; and they agree only in this Point, that they do not consider it as a State proper for a Man. But as these different States of Life are found to be grounded upon Humanity, and as to be a worthy Statesman, or a worthy Captain, it is absolutely necessary to be, more or less, a Man, they find that Humanity must not be wholly neglected, and are oblig'd in some Manner to adopt it, and to inculcate it into young People. Besides, there are some Intervals of Life wherein one finds oneself reduc'd to Humanity; for, in Effect, these particular Occupations do not perpetually take Place: The Magistrate cannot always exercise his Function, nor the Soldier his Sword, and so of the rest; Humanity now and then intervenes, and becomes an Occupation to be follow'd like the others. Some Regard must necessarily be had to Humanity, and we must have enough of it not to be caught altogether unprovided therewithal upon an Emergency. But in this, as in every Thing else, Men have most judiciously comprehended, that all Excesses are to be avoided, and take Care not to engage themselves in Humanity so far as to be caught in the Net, and so become Man in Earnest: For they have before their Eyes the Example of those singular Men of Antiquity, known by the odious Name of Philosophers. Those Men, or some

of their Number, seriously determin'd and made their Choice, and in renouncing the several usual States and Conditions of Life, those Circumstances of Humanity, enter'd into the State of Humanity itself, and, as a Set of People, Strangers to the rest of Mankind, attracted their Attention, and became their Gazing-Stock. Nay, in these our own Days, should any one venture himself to tread those unknown Regions, especially if he is so rash as to offer to penetrate too far, he runs an apparent Hazard of missing the Road, and losing himself beyond Recovery, as those others did of old. Men, in this Perplexity, have Recourse to the only remaining Expedient. It is universally agreed, that Humanity ought to have some Sort of Hommage paid it, since, be it as it will, Man is Man, of Human Species, and all imagine, that, in assuming Humanity, they render to it the Exterior and the Appearances, and thereby inance their own Value; and from hence it is that Travelling takes its Merit. We roam abroad not only to be Eye-Witnesses how far those who have the publick Approbation extend the Appearances of Humanity, in order to imitate and become like them, but Travelling itself is a Proof that, in Regard to Humanity, the World entertains those moderate Sentiments which are requisite to be had on that Subject; that it places in Man's Exterior the Value that Men have agreed to set upon it, which extends so far as to dedicate a considerable Part of their Lives in Quest thereof.

Travelling, consider'd in this Light, may very well be said to be attended with the Advantages attributed to it; and there would be Room to stand up in its Justification, even in the
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the circumstantial Detail I had enter'd upon. Youth would be in the Right to travel in order to fashion their Intellectuals, and to have them form'd like those of others. It is true that Travelling serves rather to form our Turn of Wit, as we term it, than our Wit or Understanding itself; but this Article is what recommends it, since by doing that it saves us abundance of Pains: For as the Appearances of Humanity excuses our being truly Men, the Appearances of Sense excuses one from having it in Effect, from having the true Discernment belonging to it, which is so difficult to be acquir'd, so little regarded, and so seldom met with; and Travelling, by qualifying us to talk by Rote, and thereby setting us above all solid Attention, which lays us under a Constraint, sets us above People of real Sense, who so frequently find themselves forc'd and constrain'd. People would be, likewise, in the Right to travel in order to know the World: Deportment, Behaviour, which make up the Essential of this Knowledge, form themselves perfectly well by Travelling, if not by Travelling at least by the Consideration of having travell'd: We from thence assume an Air of Importance, a Countenance which gives Notice that we expect to receive from others all that we are ready to give them, and which indicates to them the Price they ought to set upon us. This is receiv'd and establish'd: The Publick respects the distinguishing Mark we set upon ourselves, and which we bring from so far, and ratifies it. Hereby we have, in the common Course of Life, a valuable Sanctuary, and an infallible Preservative against being ever after easily abus'd and undeceiv'd as to the Esteem we have

of ourselves. We are excus'd from all Attention to what passes within ourselves, which of all others is the most painful, and from the Knowledge of ourselves, which is, generally, the most uncomfortable of all Knowledge. In the Study of the World, when in order to excel we make it our only, or at least, our chief Study, we pass our Life agreeably, satisfied with ourselves and with others; and Travelling, as being no other than a Walk we take up and down in the World, is, in that Respect, of no small Importance, in accustoming us to inspect into nothing but what presents itself to our View, and to enjoy rather than know it, to be seen and lik'd rather than known. Travelling gives us to understand, that, to make Advantage of Life, we must, likewise, make a Walk of it, a Pleasure, a Diversion which looks no farther than the present Moment; and this is, perhaps, the Use to which the Majority of Travellers put their Peregrinations, and their sole View. As to the Study of Languages, to the which Travelling gives us Room to apply ourselves, we reap from it not only a Multiplicity of Reading, which adds to the Knowledge we had before amass'd, a Variety of other Knowledge which continues still to help to dispense us from the Knowledge of ourselves: But, independent of all Reading, Languages are an Ornament: They suffice to place the Possessor among the Number of the Learned; and if they do not abundantly forward the Maturation of one's Mind, they, at least, give it Room to repose, and one is thereby dispens'd from producing its Fruit. But above all Things, Travelling may afford us Satisfaction in what regards Persons of Worth, Men of Merit: The same Motive that sets People

ple upon Travelling, prepares, it seems, ready to the Traveller's Hand, what is convenient he should have; it forms exactly that very Merit he seeks for.

Those Persons who are adorn'd with all amiable Qualifications, and who among their Embellishments introduce a Portion of Virtue, as much as is necessary to enhance their Character, and to make them pass for virtuous Men, meet with universal Applause. Some of this Class a curious Traveller can no more miss of, in his Rambles, than he can of the City whither he directs his Course, and to which the High-Road conducts him. Nor can their Example, ever in the least, fail of encouraging the Traveller, in like Manner, to render himself that Man in Vogue, that conspicuous Person, who *knows how* to adorn himself with whatever is receiv'd and establish'd, and to acquire that Merit, of which Reputation is both the Motive and the Recompence. But even if Travelling does not altogether reach that Length, if it does not furnish a young Man with all that *knowing how to do*, which this Merit requires, it will still serve to make him lose that unfashionable Character of former Ages, which stands in his Way to oppose his Career; that embarrassing Modesty, that Bashfulness which is so troublesome, and which Nature, when let alone to operate, preserves in Youth, and seems to please herself in distinguishing thereby those who are well-born. Travelling is an approv'd Remedy against this Embarrassment, and upon this Score, more than all the rest, one may stand up in its Behalf. It is certain, and all that proves it, that the current Merit of our Age demands, either the bold Character of the

Vulgar, which dispenses them from Travelling for a Character, or Travelling, which leads us to fetch from abroad this happy Boldness, which enables us courageously to soar above Age and Experience, and transports Youth, with all its Vivacity, into the Character of ripe and compleat Man. Some how or other, Travelling dispenses us from a painful, troublesome Merit, and which is seldom acquir'd till very late, and instead thereof, by Way of Subrogation, intails on us another, which is easy, and whose Formation requires but a few Years, a Merit which has this Advantage over the other, that it makes us very well satisfied with ourselves, provided others are so. In a Word, Travelling sets us in a Condition to reap from ourselves the same Advantage the World does; it is left to us to judge whether or no that is very considerable, and whether it is very much worth the while to travel.

But let us say a few Words of Travelling in Regard to our own Nation, and let us handle the Subject a little more seriously. Our Fore-Fathers were not Travellers: It was not establish'd among them, that they must fashion themselves by foreign Models, in order to make themselves look'd upon. Probity, Sincerity and Stedfastness sufficiently adorn'd them; and they were ignorant that Men with those Qualities, stood in Need of Manners or Behaviour, or that in order to be valued in their own Country they must relinquish it, and ransack remote Regions for wherewithal to please the Publick. With the Manners and Character acquir'd in their respective Families, they not only pass'd their Lives laudably and with Dignity at home, but carried with them their Manners to such
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foreign Lands as their Occasions call'd them to visit, from whence, rather proud than asham'd of them, they again return'd them to their own Homes. Without the least out-landish Mixture in their Character, they liv'd honourably, and left to our Nation a Reputation so firmly establish'd, that it is only now at last, after a long Series of Years, that we have brought about its Destruction. But likewise, say our modish Folks, those good People, for want of quitting their Mountains to come down and fashion themselves a little, were wonderfully rustick, unmannerly, and simple, and had but a very small Share of the Enjoyment of Life. They enjoy'd Life more than we do. As among them the Pleasures of Life depended not on foreign Things, but on the natural Products of the Country, they enjoy'd them with Appetite, and their Lives glided away in Ease and Felicity. If by the Unpoliteness and Rusticity they are reproach'd with, is meant their Usage of doing and saying all Things naturally, and answerable to their own proper essential Character, if they term Simplicity the Incapacity of counterfeiting or disguising, of attempting to deceive or impose on others by borrowed Qualities, it is a fresh Eulogy given them; and most certainly, could they return to the World, they would glory in what we make the Object of our Reproach, as they would, undoubtedly, reproach us with what we value ourselves upon. Could People but transport themselves from these to former Times, as they travel into other Countries, thither it would be that one might, indeed, be tempted to take a Ramble. The clownish, unpolish'd Commonwealth of those Days gives the Idea of a Fabrick rais'd out of unwrought Fragments of a Rock, which has both Majesty and

and Solidity : That of this Day, our Nation, with all the Splendor and Politeness wherewith it strives to embellish itself, represents to the Imagination nothing but Paint and Varnish ; and I am persuaded, that the Customs, Manners and Character of our Ancestors had more real Decency and Decorum in them than have the Manners and Character we affect. Every Nation has its own Character, given it by Nature, which is appropriated to the Soil, and to the Circumstances of its Inhabitants : Each Nation has, also, its peculiar Manners and Usages, as a necessary Consequence of its Character. No real Alteration should be made in either of these Particulars, but their Owners ought to content themselves with rectifying where there is Occasion ; they should cultivate the Character, and adapt the Manners to it. To go abroad for Manners to bring them home, is just toiling to become a Foreigner in one's own Country.

But the Mischief Travelling does us extends not only to the causing us to transform our ancient Character ; it introduces among us Customs and Usages which are our Destruction : Luxury, which we ought to shun more than any thing else whatever, and which less suits us than any other Nation in the Universe. We are so little adapted to it, that it renders us ridiculous in the Eyes of every rational Man, nay even in the Eyes of those we call worldly Men, who love Luxury when in its own proper Province : For what is to be seen among other Nations is proportion'd to their Opulency, and ours is wholly disproportionate to our Poverty, or, if you will have it so, to our Riches, which instantly melt away thro' the Distribution so made of them. The Folly of foreign Nations

Nations lies in consuming in Luxury the Superfluity; and this Folly is exclaim'd against by Persons of better Sense among them: Ours is in employing therein the Necessary: This reaches to Extravagance; and I am not positive, that we have among us many Persons who are mov'd by it, and who are sensible of it in its whole Extent. Our Country is not cut out for Luxury: Neither does the Character of its Inhabitants, which, originally, consists in Cordiality, and plain down right Integrity, nor the Soil itself, which requires OEconomy and Labour, and produces only what serves for the mere Necessities of Life, afford us the least Encouragement to quit a plain simple Manner of living; Luxury being so absolutely a Foreigner in our Climate, that not only it was nothing else but our Travels into other Countries that first brought us acquainted with it, but likewise every Thing that conduces towards it is convey'd to us from thence; and that is what compleats the Mischief it does us. Nay, it is Luxury, and all voluptuous living, which drag along with them Confusion and a total Neglect of domestick Cares, banish from Families all OEconomy and Tranquillity, and fills all with Disorder. It is Luxury that nourishes Pride, the Forerunner of Ruin, which deprives Men of their Eye-sight, sets them above Precautions, and urges them to fall into wrong Measures; Pride, which renders them no less odious than Luxury does ridiculous, and which breaks off that Union wherein the Strength and Safety of a People consists. Nor should Pride find any better Encouragement among us than Luxury, since, in Comparison with our Neighbours, who surround us, we are as inconsiderable

nable as we are poor. But, above all, Luxury is prejudicial to us, in that it lays us under the Necessity of acquiring wherewithal to support it. From thence arises a Necessity of entering into Emploies, and to obtain them nothing is left untried: This engenders, or at least increases Fraud, Perjury, Extortion, and all those detestable Actions, which brand the Perpetrators, and the Nations among whom these Things become common, with a Mark of Infamy, so hideous and deform'd, that all the Pomp and Luxury in the World can never erase it. All the disastrous Consequences with which Luxury can be attended, and even those which it has not any where else, it has for us: In the End it will be found, that the Dissipation of our Wealth is the least of all the Evils it brings upon us, and were that a Remedy to deliver us from it intirely, I know not whether that Particular might not be look'd upon rather as a publick Benefit than an Evil. If it was a Matter now in Agitation, whether to introduce Luxury among us, or to forbid it, any Man of Understanding, who was sensible how little it suits our Conveniency, if he could not succeed by dissuading us by solid Reason and Argument, might be tempted to introduce it, to the End that he might make Trial, well satisfied that we should detest and abhor it, when we found its Consequences.

But, he would find himself mistaken; for Luxury dazzles the Eyes of Men, and corrupts them to so great a Degree, that thereby they become in a Manner depriv'd of their rational Faculties; at least, it must produce this Effect upon those to whom it is a Stranger, and who, as they have it only by Imitation, carry it beyond

beyond all Bounds, and know not how to govern themselves according to the Means they have to support it. This we are taught by Experience: He who plainly sees his Ruin before his Eyes, still pursues the Path that leads him to it; and he who beholds his Neighbour's Fall, is so far from being terrified, or deterr'd, that he dreams of nothing but how to out-do him, and puts himself in a Sweat to follow him down the Precipice. The Mother and the Children join with the Father of the Family, and, upon this Article, bear a strict Harmony with him: Or if the Contagion proceeds from them, the Master of the House has not the Power to resist his Wife and Children, and at last follows their Foot-steps; but so or otherwise, they all hurry down the Hill, and ruin themselves in Concert with each other. Luxury and foreign Manners find Entrance even among Men of the best Understandings; and render them like those who have lost their Senses: It is true, they do not ruin themselves; but they set Examples of a Course of Life, by imitating which others meet their Ruin; and it is their Example, in particular, which seduces them, and occasions the Mischief. All this makes more common the unjust Methods of amassing Wealth, and of repairing dissipated Fortunes; those base Practises lose their Infamy, and even become supportable to the very Persons who once held them in Detestation. The Manner of living of these Times, when once admitted among them, charms their Senses; they become like so many Statues: They embellish the Commonwealth; their Attitude is that of honest Men, naturally dispos'd to do their Duty, and laying aside this they actually do it: But the Mischief
is,

is, they ought to do it in this Particular, they ought to dispel the Enchantment, and to prevent out-landish Modes from doing us all the Prejudice we have Cause to apprehend, from compleating our utter Ruin.

Luxury and Travelling, join'd together, drag after them a Course of Life which is adapted to them, and which is as pernicious as its Appearances are beautiful and commendable: I mean, in particular, the Liberty which young People of both Sexes have of seeing one another when they please, of passing whole Days together, and of devoting the far best Portion of their Times to Diversion. Even provided it was true, that other Nations set us this Example, which is not so, at least in Regard to the Female Sex, since they have no where the Liberty, while Virgins, of being alone with Men, it would still be a Way of living very contrary to Decency, and which all the Precaution, all the Reserve that might be imagin'd or hop'd for could never justify, nor prevent its being attended with very bad Consequences. Certain it is, that Maidens, by daily seeing, and conversing familiarly with young Men, part with that Shyness, that Modesty, that becoming Bashfulness, and the Taste of a retir'd Life so requisite in their Sex. Marriage, which should put an End to that Sort of Life, instead of being to them a State of Happiness and Satisfaction, becomes, if they marry Men of Judgment who know how to govern their Families, a State of Constraint, of Discontent; and if they marry Men of Gaiety and Pleasure, they continue in their former Way of Life, which is as little proper for married Women as for Virgins, no more convenient for the Husband than
for

for the Wife; and of these two Evils this last is that which is most to be fear'd, and which most commonly happens. This Intercourse, this over-great Familiarity, has still another Inconveniency; it lessens the Esteem of both Parties for each other, and People join in Wedlock with very indifferent Dispositions, the Foundation of a good Marriage, which consists in a reciprocal Esteem, being thereby shaken even before the Espousals. Young Girls thereby learn to take a Pleasure in seeing Men in general; and they afterwards find it very difficult to fix themselves to their Husbands, and to be intirely attach'd to them. Husbands, on the other Side, suffer themselves to be led away by the Allurements of Diversity, of Company, and break in upon that strict Union in which the Sweetness of Matrimony consist. All this breeds Divisions, Quarrels and a Propension to illicit Pleasures, which those Divisions still augment. In a Word, some, from this Source, abandon themselves in Earnest, and in others it creates an Insensibility of the abominable Vileness of such Proceedings; and from thence it is that, at last, the Road to all Corruption is laid open. From thence, likewise, proceeds the indifferent Education of Children, which makes the Distemper utterly incurable. Certain it is, that Persons addicted to Pleasure, to the Pass that the Manners of our present Age would direct them, even if they are not arriv'd to the last Degree of Corruption, but have rather some Inclination to Good, are incapable of giving their Children a good Education: The Example before their Eyes of a Life pass'd in Pleasures out weighs all the Instructions can be given them, and infallibly corrupts them: The poor
Children

Children, straying away from their natural Simplicity, and inuring themselves to Trifles, Appearances, Vanity and Disguise, form an Idea of a false Merit, which removes them farther from that Merit which Man ought to have in View, the Order into which he ought to re-enter, than any other Particular whatever. If this Course of Life hinders Men from acquitting themselves of domestick Duties, it is a no less Obstacle in regard to the publick Duties: Those who enter on Emploies in the Magistracy, carry with them the Corruption which they had introduced into their Families, and very far from remedying Abuses, they authorize, and render them universal, both by the Example they set, and the Reasons they find to justify them. As to the rest, all these Niceties, these Improvements, and this Kind of Politeness which People affect, and by which they pretend to enhance the Price of the Manners of our present Age, are directly, and in themselves, what our Nation ought to despise. These Things as little agree with the Masculine Character which Nature has given us, as Paint and Female Ornaments would become a Man. What an Aversion ought we not to bear them, since they cause us to degenerate, and transform us into Women, in Effect, and bring along with them a Corruption, and Indignities, which so intirely disguise us, that we are no longer to be known for the same People!

But what Obligations do not well-inclin'd Persons lie under, who, by the Emploies they hold, are become Publick Men? Doubtless they are under very great ones, and at any Price soever they ought to stand their Ground firmly in Opposition to foreign Manners, in Opposition to Luxury and Corruption, which undo us. The

Truth,

Truth is, there is a Pleasure in battling with Luxury, since the only Matter in Debate is, by Dint of good Argument, to plead the Cause of an easy, plain, and reasonable Way of Life. Of all the Tasks requir'd of an honest Man, this is the easiest; and it can scarce be comprehended how we meet with so small a Number of People who make Choice of it for themselves. But as for the Resistance to be made against the Corruption which Luxury produces, something more than an ordinary Resolution is requir'd; and there are some Cases, wherein compleatly to acquit one's self of one's Duty, one must have a good Portion of heroick Virtue, and a Strength not to be attain'd in Luxury and an effeminate voluptuous Life. But then again, every Man who designs to execute his Duty in the Employ he holds in the Magistracy, is actually call'd to this State of Heroism: In entering into this Profession, he enters into an open War against all Vice and Corruption, and ought to be always in Expectation of Occasions either to illustrate him, or to expose him for Neglect of his Duty, and for deserting his Country's Interest in its Necessity. It is my Opinion, that all will agree, that every honest Man ought much rather to expose, nay sacrifice himself for the Service of his Country, than to desert it in Time of Need. I would gladly add one Reflection upon this Point. Honest Men have generally a Maxim which limits and refrains them from giving to their Country all the Assistance that the Exigence of some important Cases demands. They content themselves with voting for it with their whole Might, and think not themselves oblig'd to a personal Maintenance of those Suffrages, or to bustle in the

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Affair

Affair so vigorously as they might; and the Reason they give is, that it seldom happens that so doing advances the Cause, and they should only expose themselves to no Purpose. Here, I believe them to be mistaken: I take it, that every Man, who bears an Office, should have little Regard to the Success, when the Cause in Question tends to what is equitable and necessary; that he then ought to do his Duty, and execute his Function to its utmost Extent; and this Duty is very plain, and depends neither on the Resolution of another to do his, nor on the many Measures taken in order to succeed. The Success of every Enterprize is the Affair of Providence, which has a thousand Ways to bring about its Designs; and the Conduct of honest Men in the Exigences which offer is of greater Importance in the Eyes of Providence than is the Success itself. If it permits a Thing to depend on the Conduct of Mortals, it is merely to try them, and to give them an Opportunity of doing their Duty. But if the Success does not answer the honest Man's Endeavours, he has, however, comply'd with his Obligation, in doing what he was able, and it is not his Fault that Justice did not take Place: This is a Satisfaction both to himself and to the Publick; since the Welfare of the Publick chiefly depends upon honest Men. Every Man, in a publick Station, ought to do the same for his Country that *Socrates* did for his; at the Hazard of being left alone, and of undergoing the Hatred and the Violence of all those whom he had oppos'd, he ought to keep his Footing courageously against whatever blemishes its Character, and to banish from it all Reproach, and that Impunity which authorizes

rizes Vice, and cultivates it; nor need we more than a small Number of Men, of the ancient Character of our Nation, to render it this important Piece of Service.

Happy Nation, could it but return to itself, and did it but know how to enjoy its Advantages! Equity, Simplicity and Probity were its Inheritance; with these Nature embellish'd it, while others deck'd themselves out with vain Pageantries, and ostentatious Ornaments, now in such Vogue here. In its State of Simplicity, it sent forth Armies which gave it a Superiority over very powerful Opposers; and what in our Ancestors was the Object of their Enemy's Contempt prov'd fatal to the Contemners: It made itself esteem'd by its Justice; and by its original Character it rais'd itself as far above other Nations as, at present, it sinks beneath them by debasing itself to imitate them: Never had Nation less Cause to be weary of its Character! How could it be possible for us to relinquish it, to lift ourselves among the Crowd of Imitators, and that we should prefer to Realities, adapted to us, Appearances which do not agree with our Circumstances, and which drive us into crooked Paths still less proper, less agreeable? It seems as if Providence, which governs the Universe, was dispos'd, that, among the Nations of the Earth, there should be one of a plain simple Character, which being without a large Share of Wealth as well as without Pretensions to any extraordinary Pomp and Splendor, lay under no Temptation of degenerating into Luxury. A happy Obscurity, a Course of Life far remote from all Ostentation, all Effeminacy, ought to have made us in Love with our

Mountains, and to have fix'd us there. In that Situation Providence was dispos'd to have protect'd us, exempt from the Troubles and Disorders which agitate the rest of the World, and to have propos'd us for a Model. Providence in us had a Mind to recompence the World for the Loss of Nature's Order, designing us as a Remnant, preserv'd in the View of the whole Earth, a Character utterly lost, and banish'd from wealthy and voluptuous Nations. How, I say once again, how could we ever be weary of it? What have we seen among the other Nations, so often unhappy, so frequently ravag'd amidst their Pomp, so often disunited among themselves, thro' their nice Improvements, and their oblique Manners, that can have rais'd in us the Desire of imitating them? How comes it to pass, that we have drawn out for ourselves a Plan, which we can never be able to fill, and still far less able to maintain; a Plan which, even if we could fill and maintain it, would for ever render us ridiculous? How can People of rational Understanding reconcile themselves to a little foolish Pageantry, ill suiting their Circumstances, and which serves only as a Blemish upon their Character; a few gaudy outward Appearances, which are maintain'd by Avarice or sordid Penury alone, not unlike that Lamp, which with the stinking filthy Oyl it contains, infects the Apartment it should illuminate? After having been vanquish'd by foreign Manners, to oppose which depends upon ourselves, and after having join'd to those Manners others still more pernicious, which our own Corruption, arriv'd to the highest Degree, has produc'd, it is to be fear'd that, in other
Respects,

Respects, we may experience the Fate of those foreign Nations, whose Spectators we so long have been, and in our Turn become a Spectacle for them to gaze at. Some of our Predecessors, Persons of Judgment and Penetration, when they first observ'd foreign Customs introduc'd among us, and the Luxury and licentious Lives of our Youth, evidently foresaw the Nation's Ruin, and even presag'd it from the first Moment : And the Judicious of these our Days, beholding all those Nuisances brought to the highest Pitch they can possibly arrive at, call to Mind those Presages, and cannot but apprehend our Downfal to be near at Hand. Some among them have had melancholy Reasons for such Apprehensions. Dear, Sir, I cordially embrace you, and am, &c.





LETTER VII.



SINCE my last Letter to you, with which I thought to have finish'd what I had to say concerning the *French Nation*; (n) something has happen'd which gives Room for another Letter. The Adventure must not be reckon'd among the most memorable Occurrences; But a Traveller who sets himself to write, lays hold of every Handle he meets with. The Story is this: We came from *Paris*, to *Lyons*, in the Flying-Coach, in Company with an *Abbé*, who pass'd for a Wit, and some Merchants. Monsieur *L'Abbé*, was reading *Boileau's Satyrs*. The Merchants listen'd to him with great Attention and Admiration, Mr. — and myself, whom the rest of the Company took to be *Englishmen*, only listen'd, but spoke not a Word.

At the first Stage, the *Abbé*, not being able any longer to bear with our Silence, ask'd us if we had ever read that Poet's Works, what we thought of them, and if we had any Thing as good in our own Country. We answer'd that we had read them, and that with Pleasure, as one of the celebrated Works of our Times; that we found more Good than Bad in them; but that we were, however, of Opinion, that some *English Poets* had in Point of Genius the Advantage over him. He did not seem to be any way pleas'd with this; and having for a Moment

(n) This is not a Fiction: The Thing happen'd as it is related, and occasion'd the writing this Letter.

ment or two turn'd over the Book, he presented it open to us, saying, with a sneering Smile: *You are come from Paris, Gentlemen, here's a Satyr on that Town. Will you be pleas'd to shew us what you find good or bad in it?* We did not expect a Proposal of this Nature; but having nothing better on our Hands, we accepted of it, as an Amusement that came in the Way. The Satyr was criticiz'd, and I had a Mind to put our Criticism in writing, to send it to you. It may serve as an Amusement to you for half an Hour, and to me during the leisure Time I shall have, the two or three Days I am oblig'd to stay in this Place. That alone would not have been sufficient to make me write it; but after having entertain'd you in my Letters with the Character and Wit of the *French*, I thought the Rehearsal of this Criticism, which has some Relation to those Things, might well follow them. It regards an Author who is not only a Wit, but in some Respect regulates the Wit of others, and I own, I would look upon it as a Favour, if I were allow'd to carve Wit for myself, when I should happen to be merrily disposed, without another's proposing any Thing to me on that Head.

If it be true that we cannot have Wit, as these Gentlemen pretend, they must expect to see us take the same Resolution which People generally do on like Occasions, and which the Philosophers took formerly with Regard to Riches; that is, to give out, that we despise what we want; to maintain that they are pernicious, and especially to cry out vehemently against those who are possess'd of them. Here you have all the Satyr, because it was all criticis'd; and because that, in order to judge well of any Performance, it is requisite that the whole Piece should be expos'd to View.

S A T I R E VI.

D E Mr. D***.

*Qui frappe l'air, bon Dieu! de ces lugubres cris,
Est ce donc pour veiller qu'on se couche à Paris?*

Voilà de grandes Exclamations. Elles ne conviennent peut-être pas trop bien à un Début, qui a bonne grace d'être simple. Mais elles conviennent à la Satire, & au sujet que le Poëte s'est choisi; car à Paris il y a peu de Nuits où il n'arrive quelque triste Evenement.

*Et quel facheux Démon, durant les nuits entieres,
Rassemble ici les Chats de toutes les goutieres?*

Ce n'est pas à cette chute que le Lecteur s'attend, & ces Chats, rassemblez par un Démon, ne doivent pas trouver ici leur place.

*J'ai beau sauter du lit plein de trouble & d'effroi,
Je pense qu'avec eux tout l'Enfer est chez moi;
L'un miaule en grondant comme un tigre en furie,
L'autre roule sa voix comme un Enfant qui crie.*

Ces Chats ressemblent aux Chats de tout Païs, c'est ce que leur Description nous apprend. Du reste, ces derniers vers sont bons, & peignent bien la chose.

BOILEAU's *Sixth Satyr* *Criticis'd.*

What Noise is this? Good God! What doleful Cries
Assault my Ears, and keep unshut my Eyes?
What spiteful Goblin does this Clamour make?
Do Men at *Paris* go to Bed to wake?

These are thundering Exclamations. They may not, perhaps, be over and above suitable for an *Exordium*, which would have a better Grace were it simple. But they agree very well with Satyr, and with the Subject our Poet has chosen; for at *Paris* few Nights pass without some disastrous Accident.

The caterwauling Cats in Garret groul,
Worse than Cur-Dogs a-nights in Hamlets houl

It is not this Fall, this Cadence that the Reader expects; nor are these Cats, (o) *assembled* by a *Goblin*, worthy to be introduc'd here.

Disturb'd and terrify'd, in vain I rouse;
It rattles as if Hell was in the House:
One grumbles like a Tyger here; and there
One like a squawling Brat, torments my Ear.

These Cats are like the Cats every where else; and this we are taught by the Description here given us. As to the rest, these last Verses are good, and paint out the Thing very well.

This

(o) Here, as well as in many other Places, I must send my Reader to the Original, which is very different from the Translation.

*Ce n'est pas tout encore. Les Souris & les Rats,
Semblent, pour m'éveiller, s'entendre avec les Chats;*

C'est encore tout comme ailleurs ; on ne reconnoit jusques ici, ni une grande Ville, ni un grand Poëte, & tout cela tient plus du Comique que du Satirique.

*Plus importuns pour moi, durant la nuit obscure,
Que jamais, en plein jour, ne fut l'Abbé de P—*

Voilà apparemment de l'Esprit, ou une Pensée vive qui doit relever le reste. Il faut, en ce cas là, qu'il y ait du mystère là dessous, quelque rapport caché entre l'importunité que peut causer cet Abbé, & celle que cause le bruit des *Souris* & des *Chats*. Hors de là, ce trait n'a que de malignité, & la malignité, lors-qu'elle n'est pas tournée contre le Mauvais, est mauvaise elle même, dans la Satire aussi-bien qu'ailleurs, & ce n'est jamais ce qui embellit une Piece de Poësie. Ces petits traits à quoi on ne s'attend point, donnent plutôt l'idée d'un Satire qui heurte ou qui ruë, que d'un Satire qui se joue.

*Tout conspire à la fois à troubler mon repos ;
Et je me plains ici du moindre de mes maux.*

C'est-à-dire, que nous allons entendre des choses plus terribles, que celles qui lui ont fait croire tout l'Enfer chez lui.

Car

This is not all my Curse; the Mice and Rats
To wake me seem in Confort with the Cats.

All this is still the very same as in other
Places; we have not hitherto the least Idea ei-
ther of a great City, or a great Poet: All we
have yet met with favours rather of Comedy
than Satyr.

As ill I can, by Night, this Plague endure,
As e'er I could, by Day, *l'Abbé de Pure*.

This carries a Face of Wit with it, and is
seemingly a sprightly Thought which should
heighten and enliven the rest. In this Case,
there must of Necessity lie some Mystery at
Bottom, some unaccountable Affinity between
the Disturbance this *Abbé* might occasion where
he came, and that which the Noise of the Mice
and Cats gives. Laying aside that, this Stroke
has nothing in it but downright scurrilous Ma-
lignity, which, when not pointed against what
is essentially bad, is inexcusable, as well in Sa-
tyr as elsewhere, and is what never embel-
lishes a Piece of Poesy. These vulgar, mean,
unlook'd for Strokes, give us rather the Idea
of a ruffianly Satyr, that rushes in to knock
out ones Brains, than of one sporting with us
for a little Diversion.

All Things at once conspire to break my Rest,
And that which I lament, disturbs me least.

That is to say, that we are about to hear of
Things still more terrible than those which
made him fancy that *Hell was in the House*.

No

*Car à peine les Coqs, commençant leur ramage
 Auront de Cris aigus frappé le voisinage,
 Qu'un affreux Serrurier, que le Ciel en courroux,
 A fait pour mes péchez trop voision de chez nous;
 Avec un fer maudit, qu'à grand bruit il apprête,
 De cent coups de marteau me va fendre la tête.*

Le Genie de la Satire devoit engager le Poëte à nous donner une description des Desordres de Paris. Car la Satire doit corriger les hommes de leur Corruption, ou comme les Habiles gens s'expriment là dessus, c'est un (p) *Ouvrage fait pour reprendre, pour censurer les Vices, les Passions déreglées, les Sotises, les Impertinences des Hommes*; cependant jusques ici, nous ne voyons rien qui réponde à cette Idée. Le Poëte s'attache plutôt à censurer les Animaux, ou la Nature qui leur a donné des qualitez incommodes, & ce qu'il dit là dessus, peut se dire du moindre Village aussi bien que de Paris, & mieux encore. Surtout les *Cris aigus*, qu'il apelle *Ramage*, se font plus entendre à la Campagne qu'à la Ville. Son chagrin contre le *Serrurier* a le même défaut que la censure des Animaux : il retombe sur la Nature qui a disposé les choses de maniere qu'il faut de Serruriers, des gens faits comme celui qu'il dépeint ici,

&

(p) Voyez le *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* sur le mot de *Satire*.

No sooner the shrill Cock his Mattins crows,
Than the Smith rises, and his Hammer goes:
Heav'n for my Sins has posted him so near,
That on his Anvil every Thump I hear;
It tears my Brains, and every dreadful Sound
Makes in my Head a terrible Rebound.

The Genius of Satyr should have engag'd our Poet to have given us a Description of the Disorders of *Paris*. For Satyr ought to correct Man's Corruption, or as the *Virtuosi* express themselves thereon, *It is (p) a Work compos'd in order to reprehend, to censure the Vices, the irregular Passions, the Follies, and the Impertinence of Mankind*: Nevertheless, we hitherto meet with nothing in the least answerable to that Idea. The Poet rather dwells upon censuring irrational Creatures, or Nature which has given them troublesome Qualities, and what he says upon that Subject may be said of the most considerable Hamlet, as well as of *Paris*, and with still more Reason. More especially the shrill Cries [*cris aigus*] (of the Cocks) which he calls (q) *Ramage* [chirping, &c. of little Birds] are more to be heard in the Country than in Town. His Spleen against the poor (r) Smith is no less faulty than his censuring the irrational Creatures: He again falls foul upon Nature, which has so dispos'd Things that there is a Necessity for Smiths, People of the very Stamp he here describes,

(p) See the Dictionary of the French Academy; on the Word Satire.

(q) See the French; the English Editor using a different Turn.

(r) Serrurier; a Lock-Smith.

& contre qui il n'y a rien à dire. Ce n'est pas le chagrin du Poëte contre ce qui l'incommode, qui mérite d'être raconté au Public, mais le mal qui se trouve dans ce qui le chagrine ; c'est là ce qui fait la beauté d'une Satire. Mais, sur-tout, il a tort en ce que pour si peu de chose, pour le *bruit* que peut faire un *Serrurier* dans le *Voisinage*, il fait intervenir le *Courroux du Ciel*. On auroit déjà pû lui reprocher sur ce pied là le début de cette Piece, où il s'adresse au *Bon Dieu* mal à propos. Il vaudroit mieux tourner l'Esprit de Satire contre de pareilles manieres de parler, que de les autoriser en les employant dans un Poëme Satirique. Elles ne font bien nulle part, mais dans la Poësie encore moins que dans la Prose, & ce n'est que faute de Genie qu'un Poëte y a recours. A parler naturellement, cette Satire, ou cette Piece de Poësie, car on ne fait au juste ce que c'est, justes ici est très peu de chose. Mais peut être que la Poësie, comme un genre d'écrire particulier, & vouë principalement à l'Harmonie, a quelque chose de privilégié, & qu'au lieu de reconnoître le simple Bon-sens pour Juge, elle a son propre Tribunal où l'Oreille préside. En ce cas-là, il y auroit de la témérité à nous de juger de cette Piece comme nous faisons, & ce n'est qu'entant que nous la supposons sujette a Bon-sens, que nous nous hazardons d'en dire nôtre pensée.

describes, and against whom nothing should be said. It is not the Poet's Spleen against that which disturbs him that merits being recited to the Publick, but the Mischief which attends the Thing that incommodes him; there lies the Beauty of a Satyr. But, more than all the rest, he is in the Wrong, for so trifling an Occasion as the Noise a Smith could make in the Neighbourhood, to bring in *les Courroux du Ciel*, [the Wrath of Heaven.] One might before have reproach'd him for that, when in the very first Line of this Piece, he, *so mal a propos*, addresses himself to the *Good God*. It would be much better to point the Sting of Satyr against such Expressions, than to authorize them by making Use of them in a Satyrick Poem. They are far from being commendable any where; but in Poetry still less than in Prose; and it is merely for want of Genius that a Poet ever has Recourse to them. To speak naturally, this Satyr, or this Piece of Poetry, for one does not justly know what it is, thus far is really very little or nothing. But perhaps Poetry, as a particular Manner of Writing, and dedicated chiefly to Harmony, has a peculiar Privilege, and instead of acknowledging simple Good Sense for its Judge, has its own peculiar Tribunal, at which the Ear sits President. In this Case, it would be Temerity in us to judge of this Piece as we do, and it is only on Account of our presuming it to be obnoxious to Good Sense, that we venture to give our Sentiments of it.

Now

*J'entens déjà par tout les charettes courir,
Les Maçons travailler, les Boutiques s'ouvrir :*

Ces deux vers sont bons en ce qu'ils sont simples, & qu'ils donnent une idée de ce qui se passe à Paris à la pointe du jour. Du reste ils ont le défaut des précédens ; ce n'est pas un Abus qu'ils attaquent ; ce ne sont point les vers d'une Satire. Si le Poëte continuë ainsi, ce n'est plus sur le pied de Satire qu'il faudra examiner cette Pièce, mais sur celui d'une Description du Bruit & des Incommoditez de Paris.

*Tandis que dans les airs mille cloches émues,
D'un funebre Concert font retentir les nuës,
Et se mêlant au bruit de la grêle & des vents,
Pour honorer les Morts, font mourir les Vivans.*

La description du bruit des Cloches est bonne, supposé qu'il soit si grand à Paris que le Poëte ait raison de relever. Du reste, Paris n'est pas autrement dans un Pais de Grêle & de Vents, & la Grêle sur tout semble être ici de trop. Mais quand même il y grêleroit plus souvent, le bruit des Cloches est un très petit inconvenient au prix d'un grand Orage ; cependant, c'est ce petit bruit, ce Concert, comme il l'appelle, qui fait ici le grand mal,

Now Carts and Coaches run along the Streets,
And next my Ear the Mafon's Mufick greets ;
Now Doors unlock'd on rusty Hinges jar,
And opening Shops expofe deceitful Ware.

These Verfes are good, becaufe they are plain
and fimple, and give an Idea of what paffes
early in the Morning at *Paris*. As to the reft,
they have the fame Defects as thofe which pre-
cede them: It is not an Abufe they are attack-
ing; thefe are not Satyrick Lines. If the Poet
holds on thus, this Piece muft not be examin'd
on the Footing of a Satyr, but upon that of a
Description of the Noife and Incommodities of
Paris.

Now Clocks and Cries a horrid Confort make,
And fnozing Priests for hated Duties wake :
Now in the neighb'ring Tow'rs the crazy Bells
By drunken Sextons ring departing Knells;
The troubled Air they with Confufion fill,
To compliment the Dead, the Living kill;
While Storms of Hail upon the Windows beat,
And various Difcords in one Chaos meet.

The Description of the Noife of the Bells is
good, fupposing it to be fo very exceffive at
Paris that the Poet has Caufe to make fuch a
Buffle about it. As to the reft, *Paris* does not
ftand in a Country of Hail and Winds; and the
Hail, more efpecially, feems to be fuperfluous.
But even if it hail'd there oftener, the Jangling
of Bells is a very fmall Inconveniency compar'd
with a great Storm; nevertheless, it is this hor-

T

rid

mal, & que dès là il n'étoit point nécessaire de faire accompagner de la Grêle & des Vents. La vérité est qu'il falloit une rime à *Vivans*, où le Poëte en vouloit venir; les *Vents* sont bons à cela, & voilà l'origine de cette Tempête. Elle devoit renforcer le bruit des Cloches pour lui aider à produire une Pointe d'esprit, s'il est vrai, du moins, qu'il y ait de l'Esprit à étendre ce bruit jusques à faire mourir les gens.

*Encore je benirois la bonté souveraine,
Si le Ciel à ces maux avoit borné ma peine.*

La *Bonté souveraine* & le *Ciel*, sont ici précisément la même chose, ainsi l'un est de trop; ou plutôt ils sont de trop tous deux; le sujet est trop petit pour remonter jusques là, & il ne faudroit jamais se servir de pareilles expressions que sérieusement & avec dignité. Le Poëte donne souvent lieu dans cette Piece à lui faire ce reproche: cela ne lui fait pas honneur.

*Mais si seul en mon lit je peste avec raison,
C'est encor pis vingt fois en quittant la maison.*

Ces deux vers sont très peu de chose; le premier, sur tout, ne dit rien, & les Expressions, si nôtre critique

vid Noise, this *Confort*; as he terms it, that here does fo much Mifchief, for which Reason there was no Occafion to accompany it with Hail and Winds. The whole Truth is, a Rhime was wanting to (s) *vivans*, [the Living] to which Word the Poet wanted to fteer his Courfe; *les Vents* [the Winds] hit it exactly, and there's the Origin of this Tempeft. It fhould have heighten'd the Tintamarre of the Bells, to have affifted the Poet in the Production of a Turn of Wit, if it is true that there lies any Wit in extending this Noife fo far as to make it *kill* Folks.

(t) But this is nothing to the Plagues to come,
'Twere well if I had known the worft at home.

The *Supreme Clemency*, and *Heaven*, [introduced in the Original] mean, in this Place, precisely one and the fame Thing, fo that one of them is certainly fuperfluous; or rather they are both fo: The Subject is too mean for fuch high Flights; nor ought Expreflions of that Nature to be ever us'd but in very fublime and ferious Matters. The Poet, in this Performance, gives frequent Room for this Reproach; nor is his fo doing much to his Credit.

A-Bed if I could not forbear to curfe,
How fhould I in the Street? For there 'twas worfe.

(u) Thefe two Verfes have very little in them; the firft, in particular fays nothing at all, and

T 2

the

(s) See the French.

(t) This *Distick* differs much from the French. Vid.

(u) Neither this, nor feveral of the enfuing Paragraphs, can well be render'd intelligible to thofe who are wholly ignorant of French.

critique doit s'étendre jusques là, n'en valent pas mieux que le Sens. *Pester* en est une qui n'est rien moins que noble. *Pester avec raison*, est plus mauvais encore ; c'est la Rime qui fait employer au Poëte ces termes, & c'est sur les mots qui font la Rime, que la critique tomberoit assez souvent, si on vouloit y faire attention, & lui relever de petites choses. Mais au lieu de critiquer sa Pièce par là, par ce qu'il peut y avoir de désagréable seulement, comme on peut lui reprocher d'avoir fait la Satire de Paris, on voudroit ne lui relever que les défauts qui regardent l'Essentiel, si du moins il y a de l'Essentiel dans sa Piece.

*En quelque endroit que j'aïlle il faut fendre la presse
D'un Peuple d'Importuns qui fourmillent sans cesse.*

Ce dernier vers est si méchant & si parfaitement inutile, que si cette Satire en general, ou du moins ce que nous en avons vu jusques ici, & la Rime en particulier ne le reclamoient, on le croiroit supposé. C'est une explication du mot de *Presse*, qui s'explique assez de soi-même. Que signifie *Peuple d'Importuns* ? *Peuple* dit tout : *Importum* se dit plutôt d'une personne à une autre, ou du moins il ne désigne que ceux qui ont tort,
en

the Expression, if we may carry our Criticism to such a Length, is not a Jot better than the Sense. PESTER [as in the Original, signifying to rail, or storm] is an Expression very far from having any thing of noble in it; and PESTER *avec raison* [to storm or curse with reason] is still worse: It is for the Rhime sake that our Poet makes Use of these Terms, and it is upon the Words which make the Rhime, that one's Criticisms might fall often enough, were one dispos'd to be over exact, and take him up for Trifles. But instead of criticising this Piece of his upon that Article, where one might meet with Rhimes which carry with them only a disagreeable Sound, as he may be reproach'd with in this his Satyr upon *Paris*, we only would remark upon the Faults which regard the Essential, if there be any Essential in the Piece.

I press'd, where e'er I went, from Throng to Throng,
Jostled and shov'd, and sometimes heav'd along;
The Crowd, incessantly, came on in Swarms,
I scarce had Use of Feet, and none of Arms.

This last Verse [in the *French*] is so very bad, and so intirely usefess, that if this Satyr in general, or at least the Part we have already perus'd, and, in particular, the Rhime, did not lay Claim to it, one would believe it to be supposititious. It is an Explication of the Word *Presse*, which alone sufficiently explains itself. And what does (x) *Peuple d'Importuns* signify? *Peuple* by itself says all. *Importun* is rather said of one

T 3

Person

(x) The Salt of this whole Paragraph must, unavoidably, be intirely lost to all those who have not some Scraps of French to help them out.

en incommodant quel qu'un. En quoi tous ces gens là ont-ils tort à l'égard du Poëte ? Il semble qu'il veuille dire, qu'ils sortent dans la rue pour le voir passer. Et *sans cesse* ; qu'ajoute t-il ici à *fourmiller*, si ce n'est la Rime ? Tantôt nous avons trouvé que, jusques là, les vers de cette Satire étoient peu de chose. Ceux que nous avons vûs depuis ne valent pas mieux, & il est certain que, jusques ici, cette Pièce ne méritoit pas même d'être critiquée, si elle n'étoit faite par un Poëte qui a de la Réputation, & qui en a fait de meilleures.

L'un me heurte d'un ais, dont je suis tout froissé.

Je vois d'un autre coup mon chapeau renversé.

Là d'un Enterrement la funebre ordonnance.

D'un pas lugubre & lent vers l'Eglise s'avance :

Et plus loin des Laquais, l'un l'autre s'agaçans,

Font aboyer les chiens, & jurer les passans.

Des Paveurs en ce lieu me bouchent le passage.

Là je trouve une croix de funeste présage :

Et des Couvreurs, grimpez au toit d'une maison,

En font pleuvoir l'ardoise & la tuile à foison.

On ne caît que dire des ces vers ; il ne sont ni assez bons pour être louez, quel que purgez d'Esprit qu'ils soient, ni assez méchans pour être blâmez : ils peignent passablement bien des choses qui ne valoient peut-être pas la peine d'être peintes.

Là sur une charette une poutre branlante

Vient menaçant de lion la foule qu'elle augmente.

Six Chevaux, attelés à ce fardeau pesant,

Ont peine à l'émouvoir sur le pavé glissant.

D'un

Person to another, or, at least, it only means such Persons as are in the Wrong, in being troublesome to others. In what are all these People in the Wrong, as the Poet pleases to intimate? He seems to hint, that they have all left their Homes purposely to stare at him. Then, this *sans cesse*; what has it to do here, tack'd to *fourmiller*, but only for Rhime-sake? A good while ago we found, that the Couplets of this Satyr had very little in them: Those we have met with since are not a Whit better; and it is very certain, that, hitherto, this Poem would not be even worth Criticism, were it not the Performance of a Poet in Reputation, and who has wrote better.

Torn are my Ruffles, rumpled my Cravat,
And rudely from my Head they toss my Hat.
Here, to'ards the Church, a pompous Funeral Show
Advances, with a solemn March, and flow:
There Lackies fall together by the Ears,
And there set Dogs upon the Passengers:
Here Paviers stopping me, I'm at a Loss;
And there I meet an ill-presaging Cross:
Here Tilers are at Work, and down they pour
Of Dirt, of Brick, and Tile a dangerous Show'r:

One knows not what to say of these Verses:
They are neither good enough to be commended,
clean and smooth as they are, nor bad enough to
be cry'd down: They tolerably well describe
Things which, perhaps, deserve not a De-
scription.

There on a Cart, with an extended Team,
Is drawn along a huge, unweildy Beam;
The Cart the trembling Street and Houses shakes,
And threatens from a far the Crowd it makes:

*D'un Carrosse en passant il accroche une rouë,
Et du choc le renverse en un grand tas de bouë :
Quand un autre à l'instant, s'efforçant de passer,
Dans le même embarras se vient embarrasser.*

Tout est bon, à n'envisager ce Poëme que comme la description des Incommoditez d'une grande Ville. Sur ce pied là on reconnoit Paris à cette Peinture, & elle vaut encore son prix par la beauté des vers,

*Vingt Carosses bien-tôt arrivent à la file,
Ils sont en moins de rien suivis de plus de mille :*

Les Carosses, même hors des cas singuliers, tels que celui que le Poëte dépeint, sont pour les Passans une des Incommoditez de Paris. Il semble qu'un Poëte Satirique auroit bonne grace de se jeter ici sur le Faute de cette grande Ville, sur ce qu'il a d'incommode aussi bien que de blamable d'ailleurs.

*Et pour surcroit de maux, un Sort malencontreux
Conduit en cet endroit un grand troupeau de Bœufs.
Chacun prétend passer : l'un mugit, l'autre jure.*

En prenant en main une des Satires du célèbre Poëte des François, nous nous attendions à critiquer des Pensées, des Censures trop ou trop peu severes; mais elle ne nous présente que des Expressions. Ce sont donc les Expressions, au cas qu'elles

Against a Coach it runs, and breaks a Spoke,
And overturns it with a furious Shock ;
It lays it in the Dirt: Another came,
And forcing to get by, it fares the same.

All this is good, were this Poem to be consider'd only as a Description of the Incommodities of a great City. Taken on that Footing, this Picture gives one some Idea of *Paris*; nor are the Couplets themselves without their Merit.

These Coaches soon are follow'd by a Score,
Those, in an Instant, by a hundred more :

The Coaches at *Paris*, even laying aside singular Cafes, like this our Poet has been painting, are for Passengers one of the Inconveniences of that City. Here it might seem, that a Satyrick Poem might, with a very good Grace, fall upon the Luxury of that great City, upon what is not only incommodious, but likewise blame-worthy in other Respects.

And, as ill Luck wou'd have it, in the Nick,
The Stop so lengthen'd, and the Crowd so thick,
A Drove of Oxen in the Street appears ;
Each strives to pass ; one lows, another swears :

In taking in Hand a Satyr of one of the most celebrated Poets of *France*, we expected to have criticis'd upon the Thoughts, the too severe or too favourable Censures ; but it only presents Expressions. It is, therefore, upon the
Expressions,

qu'elles manquent de justesse, qu'il nous reste à critiquer ; c'est à dire, qu'il faudra nous résoudre à faire sur une Piece qui n'est guere bonne, une Critique de peu de valeur. Sur ce pied là nous dirons, que de peu de la maniere dont ceci est exprimé, il semble qu'à Paris ce soient les *Bœufs* qu'on entende, les *uns mugir* & les *autres jurer*. Ou, si cela est dit des Hommes, que le mot de *chacun* doit désigner, l'inconvenient de les faire *mugir* ne fera pas moins grand que celui de faire *jurer* les Bœufs. Est-ce donc là ce Poëte si exact, si scrupuleux dans le Langage, que son *Esprit tremblant sur le choix de ses Mots, n'en dira jamais un, s'il ne tombe à propos ?*

Des Mulets en sonnant augmentent le murmure,

Le bruit de quelques clochettes doit être compté pour peu de chose parmi ce Tumulte, qui, en faveur de ces clochettes, & afin qu'on les entende, devient un *murmure*. Ici encore, comme au vers précédent, la critique tombe sur le Mot qui fait la Rime.

*Et bien tôt cent Chevaux dans la foule appelez,
De l'embarras qui croit ferment les défilez.*

A Paris comme ailleurs, les *Chevaux* se trouvent engagez dans la foule par rencontre, & sans que personne les y demande. C'est le Poëte qui les

Expressions, in Case they want Justness, that we are to criticise; which is to say, that we must resolve with ourselves to make, upon a Piece of very little Value, a Criticism worth very little. Upon this Footing, we shall say, that after the Manner these last Lines are express'd, it seems, that at *Paris* it is to be understood of the Oxen, that one *lows* and another *swears*. Or, in Case that is said of the Men, which the Word *each* ought to imply, the Inconveniency of making them *low* would be nothing less than that of making the Oxen *swear*. Is this, then, that Poet so exact, so scrupulous in Point of Diction, that, *his Mind trembling upon the Choice of his Words, would never utter one, but what fell pat to the Purpose!*

The Noise of Mules the horrid Din increase ;

The Noise of a few little Bells [carried by Mules] might be reckon'd a trifling Matter amidst all this Tumult, - which, in Favour to these Mules Bells, and to make them to be heard, dwindles into a (y) *Murmur*. Here, as well as in the immediately preceding Verse, the Criticism falls upon the Word that makes the Rhime.

And strait a hundred Horse augment the Press ;
The Defilees of the Confusion close,
Surround the Crowd, and more confus'd it grows :

At *Paris*, as in other Places, Horses sometimes happen to be mix'd among a Crowd of People, by mere Accident, without being (z)
call'd

(y) See the French.

(z) See the French.

les appelle pour rimer à *deflex*. Il bronche trop souvent au bout du vers ; & c'est là une remarque fâcheuse pour un Ouvrage de Poësie, qui doit tirer en partie sa Beauté, d'une Rime naturelle, & qui ne soit nullement affectée. Mais peut-être que dans ces vers encore, il y a du mystere qui nous passe, & que les Chevaux appelez, aussi-bien que les Bœufs qui jurent, sont de ces endroits où le Poëte aux *Saumaises* futurs prépare des tortures.

*Et par tout des Passans enchainant les brigades
Au milieu de la paix font voir les barricades.
On n'entend que des cris poussez confusement.
Dieu pour s'y faire oïr, tonneroit vainement.*

On entend les Clochettes des Mulets à un point qu'elles augmentent même le bruit, ou du moins, on entend les cris des hommes, & Dieu en tonnant, ne viendrait pas à bout de se faire entendre ? Voilà aparement de l'Esprit : l'envie d'en faire voir, ou de s'éloigner du Simple, fait dire quelquefois de grandes niaiseries : & s'il faut, à l'exemple du Poëte, appeler chaque chose par son nom, & n'avoir d'égard à la Reputacion d'un fameux Auteur, nous dirons que la liberté qu'on se donne de parler de la Divinité mal à propos & sans respect, conduit insensiblement à dire de grandes sotises. Celle-ci en est une qui sent plus le Corps de-garde que

call'd thither by any Body. It is the Poet *calls* them, to make out a Rhime to *Deflez.* He stumbles too often at the End of the Verse; and that is a very unlucky Omen in a Piece of Poetry, whose Beauty ought to consist in an easy natural Rhime, nothing stiff or affected. But, perhaps, in these Verses, as well as in several others, there lies a Mystery which surpasses our Comprehension; and it may be, that these *Horses call'd in*, as well as the *swearing Oxen*, are of those particular Passages where the Poet *aux saumaises futurs prepare des tortures.*

Chain in the Passengers by firm Brigades,
And shew in midst of Peace the Barricades;
Nothing but one continual Cry was heard,
Heav'n thunder'd, but his Thunders were not fear'd;
And none his Voice (to Dæmons dreadful) mind,
Before no Passage, no Retreat behind,
Still crowding, as they crowd they faster bind.

The Mules Bells are heard, and that to such a Point as, it seems, they even increas'd the Din, or, at least, the Voices of Men bawling out were distinctly heard; but *Heaven's (a) Thunder* could not, by any Means, make itself audible. Here's clean Wit for you! The Ambition of making People think one has Wit, or to avoid being thought simple, sometimes induces one to make Use of very silly Expressions; and if, after our Poet's Example, we must call every Thing by its right Name, and have no Regard to the Reputation of a famous Author, we would say, that the Liberty Folks

(a) Here the English differs very much. Vide.

que le Parnasse, & je doute qu'il s'en trouve de plus grandes dans les Ouvrages des Ecrivains, qu'il appelle si souvent des Sots.

*Moi donc, qui dois souvent en certain lieu me rendre,
Le jour déjà baissant, & qui suis las d'attendre,
Ne sachant plus tantôt à quel Saint me vouër,
Je me mets au hazard de me faire rouër.*

Puis-que le Poëte parle de Dieu cavalierement & sans respect, il ne faut pas attendre de lui qu'il respecte les Saints, ainsi il ne faut pas lui relever cette maniere de parler proverbiale & basse, du moins par l'abus qu'il en fait. Au reste, on seroit tenté de dire, qu'il ne fait plus à quel Saint se vouër, pour continuer son chemin; car il n'y a nul rapport entre le premier & le second de ces quatre vers, entre la nécessité de se rendre *souvent* en certain lieu, & le jour qui baisse *déjà*. Ce qui *suis las d'attendre* est encore quelque chose de bien froid

à la

Folks give themselves of talking *mal a propos* and disrespectly of the Deity, insensibly leads them to utter very great Absurdities. This we are now about, is one that favours more of the Guard-Room than of *Parnassus*; and I am in Doubt, whether our Poet ever met with any Thing worse, in the Works of those Writers whom he so often calls Blockheads.

But I, who had an Affignation made,
Was with most Pain, and most Impatience stay'd;
As well affraid that I might come too late,
As weary in so curst a Place to wait;
Not knowing to what Saint my Vows to pay,
I ventur'd every thing to make my Way;
I ran in Danger of the Wheel to scape,

Since the Poet talks of God *en Cavalier*, and without Respect, it must not be expected from him, that he should shew much Reverence to the Saints; so he is not to be reprimanded for that low and proverbial Manner of speaking, otherwise than for the Abuse he makes of it. As to the rest, one might be tempted to think, that he *knows not to what Saint to pay his Vows*, in order to continue his Way: For there is not the least Connexion between the first and the second of these four Verses [in the *French*. Vide.] between (b) the Necessity he lies under of rendering himself *often* in a certain Place, and the Sun which is *already going down*. Then this *qui suis las d'attendre* [who am weary of waiting) of his, has something in it extremely cold, after all that Tumult he had been describing; and

(b) This in English cannot be render'd intelligible, the Terms being merely French.

à la suite du Tumulte qu'il a dépeint, & le *bazard* où il se met de *se faire rouër*, doit avoir aussi une cause plus forte que cet Ennui.

*Je saute vingt ruisseaux, j'esquive, je me pousse:
Guenaud sur son cheval en passant m'éclabouffe.*

Comme ce Poëte, d'un côté, néglige de blâmer ce qu'il y auroit à blâmer à Paris, & de donner de la dignité à son Poëme, de l'autre il va chercher de petites circonstances qui ne valaient pas la peine d'être relevées, & nomme les gens par leur nom, ce qui a toujours quelque chose d'odieux. A la vérité il ne fait pas grand mal à *Guenaud*, en disant qu'il en est *éclabouffé*; mais cela n'empêche pas qu'il n'ait tort de le nommer, pour lui donner mal à propos une espece de ridicule. On pourroit dire, que c'est le Poëte qui, en chemin faisant, se plait à mettre le pied dans la bouë, & à éclabouffer les Passans.

*Et n'osant plus paroître en l'état où je suis.
Sans songer où je vais, me sauve où je puis.*

Deux vers simples, qui viennent bien à la suite des précédens, & qui sont bons par là.

Tandis

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and the Danger of the Wheel he runs, ought, likewise, to have had a stronger Reason than this Inconveniency.

And twenty Kennels was oblig'd to leap;
I squeez'd and shov'd, but still 'twas worse and worse,
For now I met with *Guenaud* and his Horse;
The Water on my Face, and Cloaths was dash'd,
And I, with Dirt, from Top to Toe was splash'd :

As this Poet, on one Side, neglects finding Fault with what is really to be found Fault with at *Paris*, and giving Dignity to his Poem, on the other Side, he rummages for little trifling Circumstances not worth the Pains of taking Notice of, and names People by their Names, which has always something in it very odious. The Truth is, he does not any great Injury to *Guenaud*, in saying he was splash'd by him; but that is no Argument of his not being to blame for naming him, and wrongfully making him, in some Measure, ridiculous. One would be inclin'd to say, that it was the Poet himself, who, as he went along, took Delight in thrusting his Foot into the Mire, and splashing the Passengers.

Nor daring in that Pickle to appear,
I labour'd to get out, and car'd not where;

Two plain Verses, which come sutable enough at the Hells of those that precede them, and on that Score are not altogether despicable.

U

While

*Tandis que dans un coin en grondant je m'essuie,
Souvent pour m'achever il survient une Pluie,
On diroit que le Ciel qui se fond tout en eau,
Veuille inonder ces lieux d'un Déluge nouveau.*

Ces vers sont bons, supposé qu'à Paris il pleuve plus souvent qu'ailleurs, & que les Pluies y soient plus abondantes. Hors de là cette Pluie, quelque bien décrite qu'elle soit, pourroit bien être ici de trop. On diroit que D***. le spirituel D***. ainsi que les hommes du commun, se trouve réduit à parler du Temps, des Vents & de la Pluie, pour se tirer d'affaire.

*Pour traverser la rue, au milieu de l'Orage,
Un ais sur deux pavés former un étroit passage.
Le plus hardi Laquais n'y marche qu'en tremblant.
Il faut pourtant passer sur ce pont chancelant.*

Nous compterons ces vers parmi les bons : ils décrivent un inconvenient de Paris, & le décrivent bien. Mais que ne faut-t-il ce Ruisseau, comme il a fauté les vingt autres ? En voici la raison, qui commence par un *Et* ; & non pas par un *Car*, comme les raisons ordinaires.

While grumbling in the Corner of a Street,
 I stay'd to clean the Dirt, and dry the Wet.
 Thus posted, thus employ'd, while I remain'd,
 To plague me worse, if possible, it rain'd,
 And pour'd as if the Skies were to be drain'd ;
 As if another Flood would fall to drown
 The Place, and to a Sea convert the Town.

These Verses are good, supposing that it rain'd oftener at *Paris* than elsewhere, and the Rains there were more excessive: Otherwise this Shower of Rain, how well soever it may have been describ'd, may very well be here look'd upon as superfluous. It induces one to think, that Monsieur *Boileau*, the bright, the witty *Boileau*, as well as other Men of an ordinary Genius, finds himself reduc'd to bring in Storms and Rain to extricate him from a Nonplus.

To cross the Street, the Waters rising high,
 Slight Boards a-thwart the flowing Kennels lie:
 The boldest Lackey trembled when he pass'd,
 And the most hasty there forgot his Haste:
 Like others, I the tottering Plank must pass,
 Or stay, and still be wetter where I was.

We'll reckon these Verses among the good ones: They describe an Inconveniency of *Paris*, and describe it well. But, why does he not leap this Kennel, as he leap'd the twenty others? Here follows the Reason, which [in the *French. Vide.*] begins with an *Et*, [*And*] and not with a *Car*, [*For*] like other ordinary Reasons.

*Et les nombreux Torrens qui tombent des gouttières,
Grossissant les Ruisseaux, en ont fait des Rivières.*

L'eau qui tombe abondamment des Gouttières pourroit bien dans la Poësie former des Torrents, mais non des Torrens qui grossissent les Ruisseaux & en font des Rivières. Cette gradation représente l'Ordre de la Nature, & alors ces Torrens poétiques n'ont plus lieu. A cela près ces vers sont beaux, l'on ne sauroit mieux décrire ce qui se passe à Paris dans le tems des grandes Pluies. Au reste, s'il est permis de deviner, en passant, pourquoi, aux dépens du Bon-sens, le Car par où ils devoient commencer se trouve changé en un Et, c'est, je pense qu'un second Car le suivoit de trop près, & que l'oreille délicate du François ne sauroit supporter deux Car si près l'un de l'autre.

*J'y passe en trébuchant ; mais malgré l'embarras,
La fraieur de la Nuit précipite mes pas.*

Ces vers encore sont bons ; ils achevent de peindre l'incommodité des ruës de Paris inondées.

*Car si-tôt que du soir les Ombres pacifiques,
D'un double cademat font fermer les Boutiques,
Que retiré chez lui, le paisible Marchand,
Va revoit ses billets, & compter son argent ;
Que dans le Marché-neuf tout est calme & tranquille,
Les voleurs à l'instant s'emparent de la Ville.*

Cette

The Waters, which from Spouts in Torrents fell,
To Rivers soon the roaring Kennels swell.

The Waters which fall in abundance from Spouts, may, in Poefy, very well form *Torrents*; But not *Torrents* which *swell* Kennels so very much as to make *Rivers* of them. This Gradation represents the Order of Nature, and then these Poetick *Torrents* take Place no longer. This excepted, these Verses are good; nor can what passes at *Paris*, in great Rains, be better describ'd. As to the rest, if, *en passant*, we may have Leave to guess, why, repugnant to good Sense, the *For*, with which they ought to begin, is transform'd into an *And*; it is, I fancy, because a second *For* follows it too close at the Heels, and because the delicate Ears of the *French* are not able to bear with two *For's* so near each other.

I tripp'd in passing, but approaching Night
Quickn'd my Speed as it increas'd my Fright.

These Verses are, likewise, good; they compleat the Description of the Incommodity of the Streets of *Paris*, when over-flown with great Rains.

For when the peaceful Shades the Skies obscure,
And Shops are shut, and Chains defend the Door;
When o'er his Bags the glad Mechanick looks,
His Bills examines, and his guilty Books;
When ev'ry Thing at the *Marche-Neuf's* in Peace,
Then the Thieves sally, and the City sieze:

Cette Description encore est belle, & l'on y reconnoit Paris. Mais la circonstance de la tranquillité du *Marché-neuf* a quelque chose de petit, & ne rencherit point sur les *Boutiques fermées* & sur le *Marchand retiré*; & le dernier vers, qui d'ailleurs seroit très bon, a le défaut de se rapporter à cette circonstance. On diroit que la tranquillité du *Marché-neuf*, est le signal qui donne lieu aux *Voleurs* de s'emparer de la Ville. Il faloit rendre cette tranquillité plus générale, & telle qu'elle regardât tout Paris, puisque c'est de tout Paris que les *Voleurs* s'emparent. Ici, le Poëte perd encore une belle occasion de blâmer: Ce n'est guere pour subsister que l'on vole à Paris, ou du moins ce n'est pas ce qui y rend le nombre des *Voleurs* si grand; on y vole pour avoir de quoi fournir au Train de vie qui y est ordinaire.

*Le bois le plus funeste, & le moins fréquenté,
Est, au prix de Paris, un lieu de sûreté.
Malheur donc à celui qu'une affaire imprévue
Engage un peu trop tard au détour d'une rue;
Bien tôt quatre Bandits, lui serrant les côtes:
La Bourse: il faut se rendre; ou bien non, résistez,
A fin que vôtre mort, de tragique mémoire,
Des massacres fameux aille grossir l'Histoire.*

This Description is, likewise, smart enough, and it gives us an Idea of *Paris*. But the Pacifickness of the *Marche-Neuf* carries with it something very mean, and does little Credit to the *Bills* and *guilty Books* of the *glad Mechanick*; and the last Verse, which is, otherwise, very good, labours under the Defect of depending upon that Circumstance. One might imagine, that the Calmness of the *Marche-Neuf* was the Signal which gave Room for the *Thieves* to *seize the City*. This Calmness should have been made more general, and such as might have included all *Paris*, since it was all *Paris* that the *Thieves* *seiz'd*. Here, again, the Poet loses a very proper Occasion of exerting his Satyrick Faculty: It is very seldom that People rob at *Paris* for bare Subsistence; or, at least, it is not that which makes the Number of Felons so great: They rob there in order to get where-withal to support the voluptuous Manner of Living in Practice.

No Wood, where bloody Murderers retreat,
But what's still safer than a *Paris* Street?
Wretched the Man whom Business keeps abroad,
The Danger would be less to trust the Road,
If thro' an Alley he's oblig'd to go,
'Tis Odds but he in Ambush finds the Foe:
Beset by Rogues, saluted with a Curse,
'Tis well if they're contented with his Purse:
If he resists they cut his Throat, and then
His Death's recorded by some Ballad Pen;
Or sung in Doggrel Verse, or serves to fill
The Tales of Massacres, and Weekly Bill.

Ce morceau qui nous représente ce qui se passe à Paris, & qui s'y passe assez souvent pour mériter d'entrer dans une Satire, peut, je crois, passer pour ce qu'il y a de meilleur. C'est un trait de peinture naturel & hardi, qui frappe comme venant de main de maître. En effet, on diroit qu'un Maître n'a touché à cette Piece que par-ci par-là, comme il est ordinaire aux Peintres fameux, de relever de quelques traits les Ouvrages de leurs Apprentifs, & de les faire passer ensuite sous leur nom.

*Four moi qu'une Ombre étonne, accablé de Sommeil,
Tous les jours je me couche avecque le Soleil.
Mais en ma chambre à peine ai-je éteint la Lumière,
Qu'il ne m'est plus permis de fermer la paupière.*

Ces vers ne sont plus de la même force : le Poëte dit qu'il se couche avec le Soleil, parce qu'une Ombre l'étonne ; c'est sa principale raison ; & il ajoute, comme en passant, qu'il est accablé de Sommeil, qu'en est une beaucoup plus naturelle & plus forte. A ces circonstances, il en ajoute une autre assez plaisante : il se couche avec le Soleil, & il éteint la Lumière.

*Des Filoux effrontez, d'un coup de pistolet,
Ebranlent ma fenêtre, & percent mon volet.*

C'est

This Fragment, which represents to us what is transacted at Paris, and which happens often enough to deserve a Place in a Satyr, may, I believe, pass for some of the best of the whole. It is a Stroke bold and natural, which strikes as done by a Masterly Hand. In Effect, one would be apt to think, that this Piece had been touch'd by a Master, only here and there, as famous Painters commonly embellish the Performances of their Disciples with some Strokes, and then make them pass under their own Name.

For me, my Business with the Day is done;
I regulate my Setting with the Sun:
Fast then my Doors, my Shutters close I keep,
And when he goes to Bed, I'd go to Sleep:
But 'tis in vain in Town to hope for Rest,
For Sleep the Eyes, and Quiet flies the Breast;
And scarce my Candle's out before I find
No Ease is there, or for the Eyes or Mind:

Here is no longer the Force and Energy that appear'd in the foregoing Lines. The Poet says, that he *sets with the Sun*, because [as the Original has it] *he is affraid, even, of a Shaddow*; that is his chief Reason; and he adds, as by the Bye, that *he'd fain Sleep*, which is a much stronger and more natural Reason for going to Bed early. To these Reasons he joins another pleasant enough; *he lies down with the Sun, and puts out his Candle*.

Some desp'rate Burglarer his Pistol fires,
Nor always innocent of Blood retires;
The Ball thro' Windows and thro' Curtain flies,
And Fear presents the Robber to my Eyes.

This

C'est un hazard bien extraordinaire que celui-là, & qui ne doit point être compté parmi les incommoditez de Paris. Il auroit autre chose à dire sur les *Filoux*, qui les caractériseroit mieux, & de tous Personnages que le Poëte pouvoit leur faire jouer, il n'y en a peut-être aucun de si recherché que celui de leur faire tirer ce *coup de pistolet*, ni qui les distingue moins des *Voleurs*. Au reste, ces six vers, aussi-bien que plusieurs autres de ce Poëme, ne sont rien moins que des vers aisez & libres, dont la Rime soit heureuse, elle est trop chargée, trop clouée au vers. Ce Poëte avoit raison de vouloir apprendre de Moliere *l'art de la trouver*, & si plusieurs de ces Poëmes ressembloient à celui-ci, on pourroit dire qu'il avoit raison de vouloir apprendre de lui *l'art de ne rimer plus*.

*J'entens crier par tout, au meurtre, on m'assassine;
Ou, le feu vient de prendre à la maison voisine.*

Les *Assassinats*, quoi que frequens à Paris, ne le sont pas au point qu'il en donne l'idée, en faisant crier par tout au meurtre, & les *Embrasemens* n'y sont pas plus ordinaires qu'ailleurs, peut-être même

This is an Accident of a very extraordinary Nature, and which has no Room to be reckon'd among the Incommodities of *Paris*. Something else might have been said concerning the *Thieves*, which would have characteriz'd them much better; and of all the Parts our Poet could have made them act, there would not, perhaps, have been one so inconsistent, so far fetch'd as that of making them *fire their Pistols*, or that less distinguishes a Felon or Robber. As for the rest these last (c) six Couplets, as well as several others in this Poem, are far from being free and easy Verse, commendable for their lucky unaffected Rhimes: No, they are too much forc'd, and, as it were, *rivetted* into the Tails of their respective Verses. This Poet was in the Right to have a Desire to learn of *Moliere* L'ART DE LA TROUVER; [The Art of finding it.] and if many of his Poetick Performances are like this, one might say, that he would have been in the Right to have learn'd L'ART DE NE RIMER PLUS. [The Art of rhiming no more.

Hark! Murder! Help me! Help! I hear 'em cry,
Thieves! Thieves! And serenaded thus I lie.
Now Fire they tell me's in our Neighbour's House,
And from my Bed, in mortal Dread I rouze:

Assassinations, tho' frequent enough at *Paris*, are not, however, so very common as the Idea he gives us seems to intimate, nor go they such a Length as to salute one's Ears so often with

(c) They are so in the English, tho' but six Verses in the French,

même l'y sont-ils moins qu'en aucune autre grande Ville, & que c'est le Poëte qui met ici le feu à une maison pour se tirer d'affaire.

*Tremblant, & demi mort, je me lève à ce bruit,
Et souvent sans pourpoint je cours toute la nuit.
Car le feu, dont la flamme en ondes se déploie,
Fait de notre cartier une seconde Troie;*

Vous diriez que tout son cartier est réduit en cendres, que le feu le poursuit dans sa fuite; & même que cela lui arrive souvent.

*Où main Grec affamé, maint avide Argien,
Au travers de charbons va piller le Troïen.*

Ce Pillage acheve de donner l'idée d'un grand Embrasement.

*Enfin sous mille crocs la Maison abîmée
Entraine aussi le feu qui se perd en fumée.*

Cet Embrasement, comparable à celui de Troie, & qui l'oblige de courir toute la nuit, se réduit enfin à une Maison brûlée. Les Evenemens generaux qui se trouvent ramassez dans cette Piece, devroient du moins avoir leur exactitude, &

with *Murder! Murder!* Nor are Fires more frequent there than elsewhere; nay, perhaps, it might be made appear that they are even less common there than in any other great City, and that it is the Poet who here sets a *House* on Fire merely to extricate himself.

Half naked from our House to his I run,
All Night in Terror that 'twill take our own;
The raging Flames our Neighbourhood destroy,
And all around is like a second *Troy*.

Would not one imagine, that his whole *Neighbourhood* was reduc'd to Ashes, that the *Flames* were pursuing him close at the Heels, and even that all this happen'd very frequently?

Where many an *Argive* Rogue, and greedy *Greek*,
Thro' Fire and Ashes *Trojan* Plunder seek.

This *Plunder* compleats the Idea of a most lamentable Conflagration.

Down with a thousand Cracks the Fabrick falls,
And bare at last are left the burning Walls;
The Fury of the Flames the Ruins broke,
And the choak'd Fire is lost itself in Smoke.

This mighty Conflagration, comparable to that of *Troy*, and which oblig'd him to (d) *run* all Night long, at length dwindles to the burning of one (e) *House*. The general Incidents which we meet with pil'd up together in this Piece, ought

(d) *So says the Original. Vide.*

(e) *As in the French.*

& être par-là au dessus de la Critique ; mais il faudra nous contenter de la beauté particulière des vers. Ces deux ici sont très beaux, & peignent bien la chose. C'est dommage qu'ils en renversent tant d'autres.

*Je me retire donc, encore pale d'effroi
Mais le jour est venu quand je rentre chez moi
Je fais pour reposer un effort inutile :*

Ces trois vers peuvent, je crois, être mis au rang des bons ; ils sont simples & sans Esprit. Il y a un peu plus d'Esprit dans celui qui suit, & il vaut un peu moins.

Ce n'est qu'à prix d'argent qu'on dort en cette Ville.

Ne diroit-on pas que le Sommeil se vend à Paris que c'est à tant par heure, ou à tant par nuit qu'on y dort ?

*Il faudroit dans l'enclos d'un vaste logement,
Avoir loin de la rue un autre appartement.*

C'est

ought at least to have their Share of Exactness, and in that Point to have kept out of the Reach of Criticism: But I perceive we must alone content ourselves with the particular Beauty of the Verses. These last Verses are very good, and paint the Thing extremely well: It is Pity that they knock on the Head so many others.

Still pale with Fear, I to my House return'd;
And every Thing, methought, about me burn'd:
'Twas light before I to my Lodging came,
But to my Bed both Day and Night's the same:

These Verses may, I fancy, be likewise rank'd in the Number of the good ones: They are plain, and without abundance of Wit. There is somewhat more Wit in what follows, tho' not without Blemish.

I lay me down to rest, for Rest I pray,
Which none can have, in Town, unless they pay.
At *Paris*, Sleep, like other Things is sold,
And you must purchase your Repose with Gold:

Would not any Body swear, that, at *Paris*,
Sleep was sold at so much by the Hour, or that
People *slept* at such a set Price *per Night*?

Room within Room, at Rates excessive, hire,
And far from those which front the Street retire;
'Tis well if you the Noise from thence can keep,
And if in any Corner you can Sleep.

He

C'est trop s'arrêter sur ce qui regarde son Sommeil. Au lieu de nous dire comme quoi on ne peut pas dormir à Paris, ou y passer tranquillement la Nuit, & d'apuiér là-dessus, il pouvoit se plaindre de ce qu'on n'y peut pas passer tranquillement le Jour, qu'on n'y est point à soi, à cause du grand nombre de gens dont il faut essuier les Visites. Cet inconuenient doit être très-grand pour un Homme d'esprit, pour un Poète fameux, & il convient mieux à la Satire, c'est sur ce pied là qu'il seroit bon d'avoir loin de la rue un autre appartement.

Paris est pour un Riche un Pais de Cocagne.

Pas trop Pais de Cocagne, puisque tantôt le feu prend à la maison voisine, que tantôt on est menacé d'un Déluge nouveau; que les Filoux tirent des coups de pistolet & font crier au meurtre que le bruit des Cloches, des Vents & de la Grelé font mourir les gens, & que le Riche lui même est renversé dans son Carrosse, qui se trouve jetté, dans un tas de bouë dans un grand tas.

*Sans sortir de la Ville, il trouve la Campagne.
Il peut dans son Jardin, tout peuplé d'arbres verts,
Receler le Printems au milieu des Hivers,
Et foulant le Parfum de ses plantes fleuries,
Aller entretenir ses douces rêveries.*

Fouler

He dwells by much too long upon his *sleeping*. Instead of acquainting us, in such *prolix Terms*, that People cannot rest as they would at *Paris*, for the Noises they hear in the Night, he might rather have complain'd of his not having an Hour in the Day to himself, by Reason of the Multiplicity of Visitors, with whose Impertinence he was continually pester'd. This, indeed, would have been a very great Inconveniency to a Man of Wit, a famous Poet, and a much properer Subject for Satyr: Upon this Account, it would be very proper he should retire far from those Rooms which front the Street.

Paris is for the Rich a glorious Place,

Not so very glorious a Place neither, all Things consider'd; since, every now and then, a Neighbours House takes Fire, one is threaten'd with another Deluge, the Thieves fire their Pistols thro' Windows and Curtains, People cry out Murder, the Tintamarre of Bells, the Winds and the Rain kill Folks, and the Rich themselves are frequently overturn'd in their Coaches, and left sprawling in the Mire, a great Heap of Mire. [See the French.]

From Town they, when they please, to Country pass;
Within the Walls they have their Grotts and Groves,
Their flow'ry Gardens, and their green Alcoves;
In Midst of Winter they enjoy the Spring,
And hear the captive Birds in Cages sing:
The City Air's perfum'd with Sylvan Sweets,
And lonely Walks are join'd to crowded Streets;
Where he who's rich may on his Wealth employ
His Thoughts, and sweetly his dearself enjoy.

Fouler du Parfum, est une expression hardie, & la Pensée l'est aussi : A Paris les *Jardins* ne présentent point en *hiver* des *Plantes fleuries* à fouler. Mais quand cela seroit, il n'y auroit pas là de quoi remplir l'idée d'un *Pais de Cocagne*, & si la Ville de Paris la donne, c'est par de tout autres endroits. Ce *Pais de Cocagne*, de quelque manière qu'on l'entende, est une conclusion à laquelle on ne s'attend point dans une Poëme sur les Incommoditez de Paris.

*Mais, moi, grace au Destin, qui n'ai ni feu ni lieu
Je me loge où je puis, & comme il plaît à Dieu.*

D'abord le Poëte a un *chez soi* au voisinage d'un Serrurier ; après cela il insinue qu'il a un *Apartment*, quand il dit, que pour dormir il en faudroit avoir un autre. Ici il n'a ni feu ni lieu ; le tout en vingt-quatre heures de tems. N'est-ce pas là *sur la Scene*, en un jour, renfermer des années ? Mais c'est qu'il importe davantage de lui relever, c'est que, finissant comme il a commencé, il fait intervenir Dieu mal à propos ; Dieu & le Destin, & en parle d'une manière indigne. C'est qu'un peu d'Esprit fort, qui met au-dessus des Sentimens vulgaires, fait bien ; cela donne un air cavalier qui impose & fait honneur dans le monde. En cela le Poëte n'imité pas son modèle : *Horace* non-seulement prononce avec respect les noms de *Jupiter* & d'*Apollon*,

mais

Trample on Perfumes, [as in the Original. *Vide.*] is a bold Expression, and the Thought is also bold. The Gardens at Paris present us not, in *Mid-Winter*, with flowery Plants to tread upon. But even if all that was real Fact, it would not be sufficient to furnish out an Idea of *un Pais de Cocagne*, [a glorious Place;] and if the City of Paris deserves that Title, most other Places do the same. After what Manner soever this *Pais de Cocagne* is to be understood, it is a Conclusion one did not expect in a Poem concerning the Incommodities of Paris.

But I, thank Fate, who've neither House nor Home,
Am glad if any one will make me Room;
To sleep I'm forc'd to hire another's Bed,
Lodge where I can, and where by Chance I'm led.

At first, our Poet has a *Home* in the Neighbourhood of a *Smith*: Afterwards, he insinuates, that in order to get a little *Sleep*, he must take a new Lodging: Here he has neither *House nor Home*; and all this within four and twenty Hours. Is not this *sur la Scene, en un Jour, renfermer des Années*? But what he most deserves to be taken up for is, that, concluding as he began, he, disrespectfully, introduces *God*; *God* and *Fate*; and that after a very unworthy Manner. He does it because he is of Opinion, that a little strong Wit, *alias* Libertinism, which exalts one above vulgar Sentiments, does well, that gives one a Gentleman-like Air, which makes one esteem'd and honour'd in the World. But in this our Poet does not intimate his Model: *Horace*, not only pronounces the Names of *Jupiter* and *Apollo* with Reverence, but even

mais il pare même plusieurs de ses Poësies de Sentimens religieux; il se fait gloire de les avoir, & il veut que les Romains les aient de même qu'ils respectent les Dieux. Pour *Virgile*, qui est un Poëte sans défaut, outre qu'il fait de la Religion le grand mérite de son Héros, du pieux *Enée*, les plus beaux endroits de son Poëme tirent leur beauté des Sentimens religieux que l'on y remarque. Mais *Virgile* & *Horace* valoient par le Cœur autant que par l'Esprit; ils ne se regloient pas sur le goût du Peuple, mais, en Genies supérieurs, ils en regloient le Goût. La plupart de ceux qui prennent aujourd'hui le nom de Poëtes, pourroient bien n'être que des Genies subalternes, des Imitateurs des Poëtes. Ou ils ne sentent pas les grandes Folies des Hommes, les Folies en vogue, ou ils sont Peuple eux mêmes. Au reste, comme il n'y a rien de plus triste que de n'avoir pas les Sentimens de Religion, qui sont le Mérite de l'Homme, il n'y a rien de plus lâche que de n'oser pas faire paroître ces Sentimens, lors qu'on les a, d'être Homme, & d'avoir honte de ce qui fait l'essentiel de l'Humanité.

adorns several of his Poems with religious Sentiments: He glories in possessing them himself, and is desirous that the Romans should, likewise, be possess'd of them, and that they should revere the Gods. As for *Virgil*, who was a Poet without Fault, besides his making the chief Merit of his Hero, the pious *Aeneas*, to consist in Religion, the Beauty of the finest Passages in his Poem lies in the religious Sentiments wherewith they are embellish'd. But *Virgil* and *Horace* are no less to be admir'd for the Beauty of their Minds, than for the Sprightliness of their Wit and Genius; they did not regulate their Thoughts according to the Taste of the Publick, but like Men of superior Genius, they regulated that. The Majority of those who, in our Days, assume the Name of Poets, may very well be look'd on only as Subalterns, Men of low Genius, Imitators of the Poets: They either are blind to the Follies of Mankind, to the Follies in Vogue, or else they are themselves like the rest of the Vulgar. As to the rest, as there is nothing more deplorable than not to have Sentiments of Religion, in which Man's Merit consists, so there is nothing more pusilanimous than not to display those Sentiments, when one is possess'd of them, to be a Man, and to be asham'd of what is the very Essential of Humanity.

But

But what! Is this one of the applauded Poems of *France*, one of the ten or twelve Satyras of its famous Poet? And does *Paris* afford Monsieur *Boileau* nothing but this! This City, says he, abounds with all Sorts of Inconveniencies: We hear Noises all Night long, which hinder us from sleeping: At break of Day the Tradesmen begin to work, and the Noise redoubles: There are Storms of Wind and Hail: The Streets are crowded, and consequently very incommodious for Passengers, since the Throngs are sometimes so very great, that People are thereby interrupted from their urgent Affairs, by not being able to get along: Those who are out late at Night, are in Danger of falling into the Hands of Robbers: To little Purpose it is there to go to Bed in Hopes of Rest; for some neighbouring House or other takes Fire, and one is expos'd to new Terrors and Vexations: *Paris* is a fit Place for none but the Rich, who pass their Lives gloriously; and the Poet, not being of that Number, passes there his Time but very indifferently.—This is a Summary of what, in florid Terms, this Poetick Performance acquaints us with, and which is very little worthy our Knowledge. The whole is of no Manner of Value, either for the Wit or good Sense it contains; nor has it any thing to recommend it as a Poem, excepting the bare Expression alone: That is what it has Poetical in it. A single *Prosaick* Verse, that is, a Verse which expresses itself in ordinary Terms, is consider'd as an unpardonable Fault in a Piece of Poetry; with much more Reason, then, may a Poem, intirely *Prosaick*, a Poem that says nothing at all, be consider'd as a bad Performance, among Poetick Performances. Where is the *Prosaick* to be met with but in the Expression? If that is true; if the Expression

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pression is all the Advantage Poesy has over Prose, Poesy is very inconsiderable. But that is not the Case: This Language of the Gods, as the Poets term it, ought to tell us sublime Things, and likewise to tell them us after a sublime Manner; hence it proceeds, that Mediocrity in Poesy is look'd upon as a Fault; and this one would take to extend as well over the Sense as over the Expression. It is certain, that to dress up ordinary Thoughts in fine Expressions is giving us the Appearances of Poesy, and not Poesy itself. But in this Piece, perhaps, Fault might be likewise found with the Expression, nay even with the very Rhime, which ought to be one of the chief Ornaments of a Poetick Performance; I have already, *en passant*, drop'd a Word on that Subject; I know not whether or no I am in the Right. It seems to me, that the Rhime, in order to give a good Grace to Verse, ought not to contain the Essential, but some Circumstance only; that it ought to embellish as well as finish it, and to have something in it free and sporting; and that the Verse have as little Dependence upon it as possible. These of this Poet have none of that Beauty: The Sense very often depends upon the Rhime, which makes his Verses rather hobble than soar. In Regard to the Sense, were it worthy of Poetick Numbers, this Defect ought to be over-look'd; but that excepted, since the Essential of Poesy is here wanting, it consequently starts a fresh Reason for placing this Satyr in the Rank of ordinary Poems. But every celebrated Poet may, perhaps, to a certain Point, have it in his Power to establish a Piece, in ranking it among his other Productions, as Sovereigns have it in their Power to ennoble any of their Subjects, or legitimate their spurious Off-spring. If that were so, our Criticism would reach

reach farther than it ought to go, and we should be in the Wrong to condemn this Poem otherwise than on the Footing of a Satyr, of which it bears the Name without having the Character. And if we would be positively bent to have it needs be a good Satyrick Piece, there still remains one Hole for it to creep into, and to become such; but I am not sure we could get it to pass upon the World: I mean to consider it as *une Piece chagrine*, a *peevish* Piece, wherein the Poet has amass'd all the Incidents he could think of to put out of Humour, not a reasonable Man, which is the Aim of common Satyrs, but Incidents which work that Effect upon capricious whimsical Persons, who fret at every Thing that does not hit their Taste. This is a Character which really deserves to be describ'd. Upon a Footing of this Nature, indeed, this Poem may very well be call'd a Satyr; and it must be allow'd, that, generally speaking, the Poet has handled his Subject mighty well.

This, Sir, if my Memory has not fail'd me, is the very Criticism we made upon Monsieur Boileau's Satyr, except it was that we were somewhat more particular. To have made a better Criticism, we should have had a better Piece to work upon: But Monsieur *L'Abbé*, who presented this to us, probably thought, he must give us one which did not treat of Matters of too sublime a Nature, and one that, at least, was not beyond our Comprehension; and therefore he pitch'd upon this, as rather easy to be criticis'd upon, than proper to furnish out Matter for a good Criticism. Adieu, dear Sir; I make account soon to follow my Epistle, and in a few Days to have the Pleasure of embracing you, as being, &c.

F I N I S.